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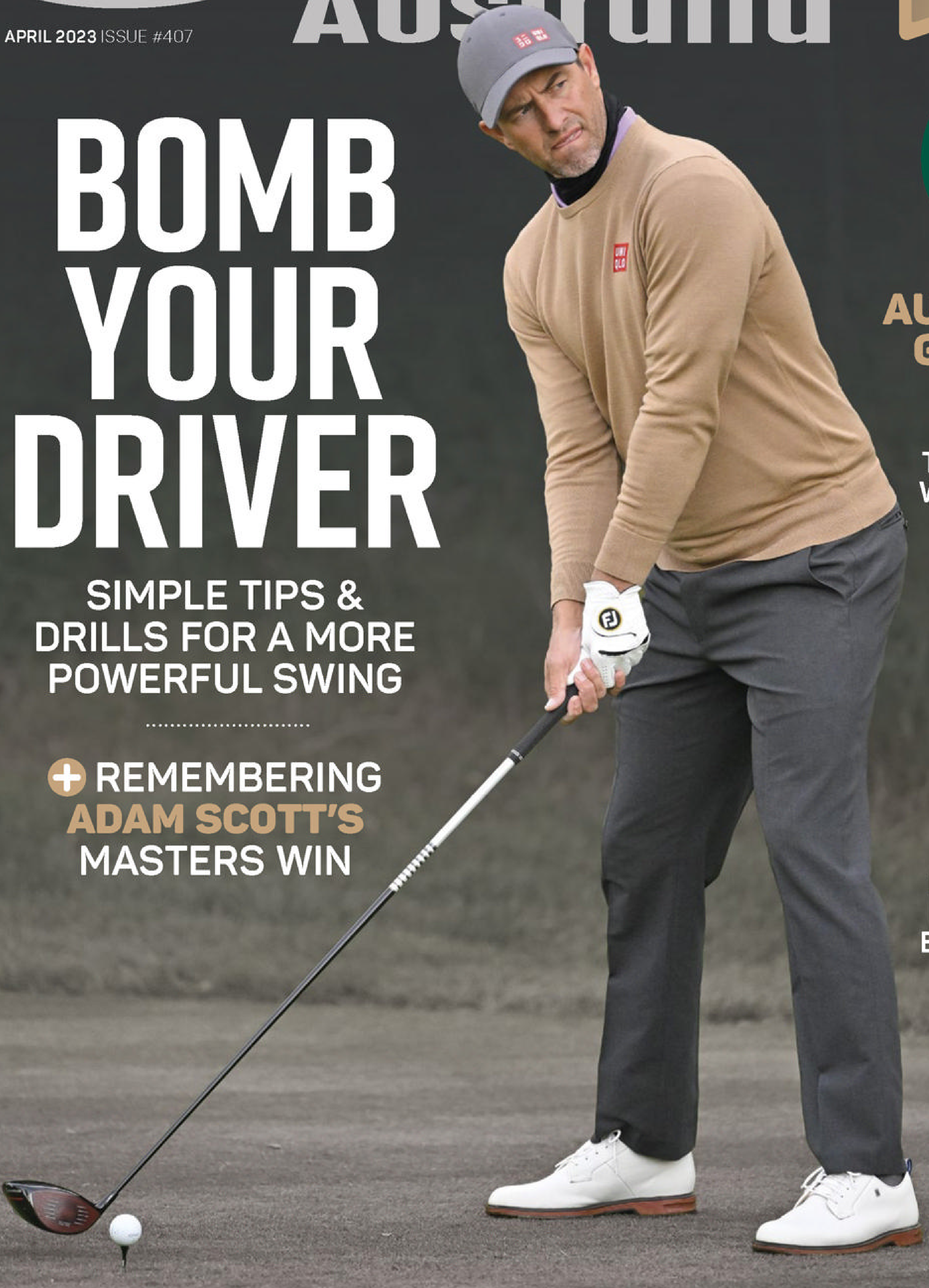

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TEEING OFF

BY **BRENDAN JAMES** | GOLF AUSTRALIA EDITOR

"… ADAM SCOTT ON THE COVER … IT PROVED LUCKY ENOUGH TEN YEARS AGO THAT IT MIGHT JUST WORK AGAIN."

For as long as I can remember, April has meant one thing … the Masters. The attraction of watching the year's first major grabbed me at an early age, as I recall braving an early morning chill to watch an abbreviated coverage of the 1980 tournament before heading off to school. Of course, that was the year Seve Ballesteros won his first green jacket by four shots but it was the final round chase by the now late Jack Newton that had me enthralled. He finished second alongside Gibby Gilbert and, sadly, that was the last major Jack would seriously contend in.

There have been plenty of anxious moments spent perched in the 42 years since. With the exception of a brief period of a few years early this century when the oohs and aahs seemed to disappear from the event, Augusta has never ceased to provide excitement from day one. There have been days of great torment for Australian golf fans of the Masters from the Larry Mize chip-in in 1987 to the four-birdie closing run of Charl Schwartzel to shut out Jason Day and Adam Scott in 2011.

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LEARN FROM AUGUSTA'S MOST FAMOUS SHOTS
FORGOTTEN HOLES
WHERE THE MASTERS IS REALLY WON & LOST
THE GREEN JACKET
A COLOURFUL HISTORY

What hurt most about the near misses, and arguably attracted us more to the Masters, is that it took so long for an Australian to drink in the joy of slipping on a Masters green jacket.

Australians have won the America's Cup, the Tour de France, world championships in a wide range of sports but, up until 2013, no man from Down Under had won at Augusta. Aussies had won nine Open Championships, two U.S Opens and three U.S PGAs. Our men had finished second at the Masters six times, including Greg Norman's heartbreaks in 1986, 1987 and 1996. Close but no cigar.

Then all our hopes came true in 2013, thanks to Adam Scott.

"It's amazing that it's my destiny to be the first Aussie to win … just incredible," he would say later.

Believe it or not, a decade has quickly slipped by since Scotty holed that 15-footer to make history. *(You can read some recollections from that great day for Australian golf, starting on page 48).*

And here we are again, eagerly awaiting another Masters and hoping an Aussie can win. Scott, Cam Smith and Harrison Crowe already have their spots in the field and we'll have to wait and see if the likes of Jason Day, Min Woo Lee and Lucas Herbert can play their way to Augusta via the world rankings.

Golfers can be a superstitious lot. Golf magazine editors are even worse, which is why – as we did on the eve of the 2013 Masters – we have run Adam Scott on the cover … It proved lucky enough ten years ago that it might just work again.

To keep up to date with all the news during Masters week, subscribe to our newsletter at www.golfaustralia.com.au and we will deliver all the latest views, news and insights from Augusta right into your inbox.

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COURSE REVIEW

PORTARLINGTON
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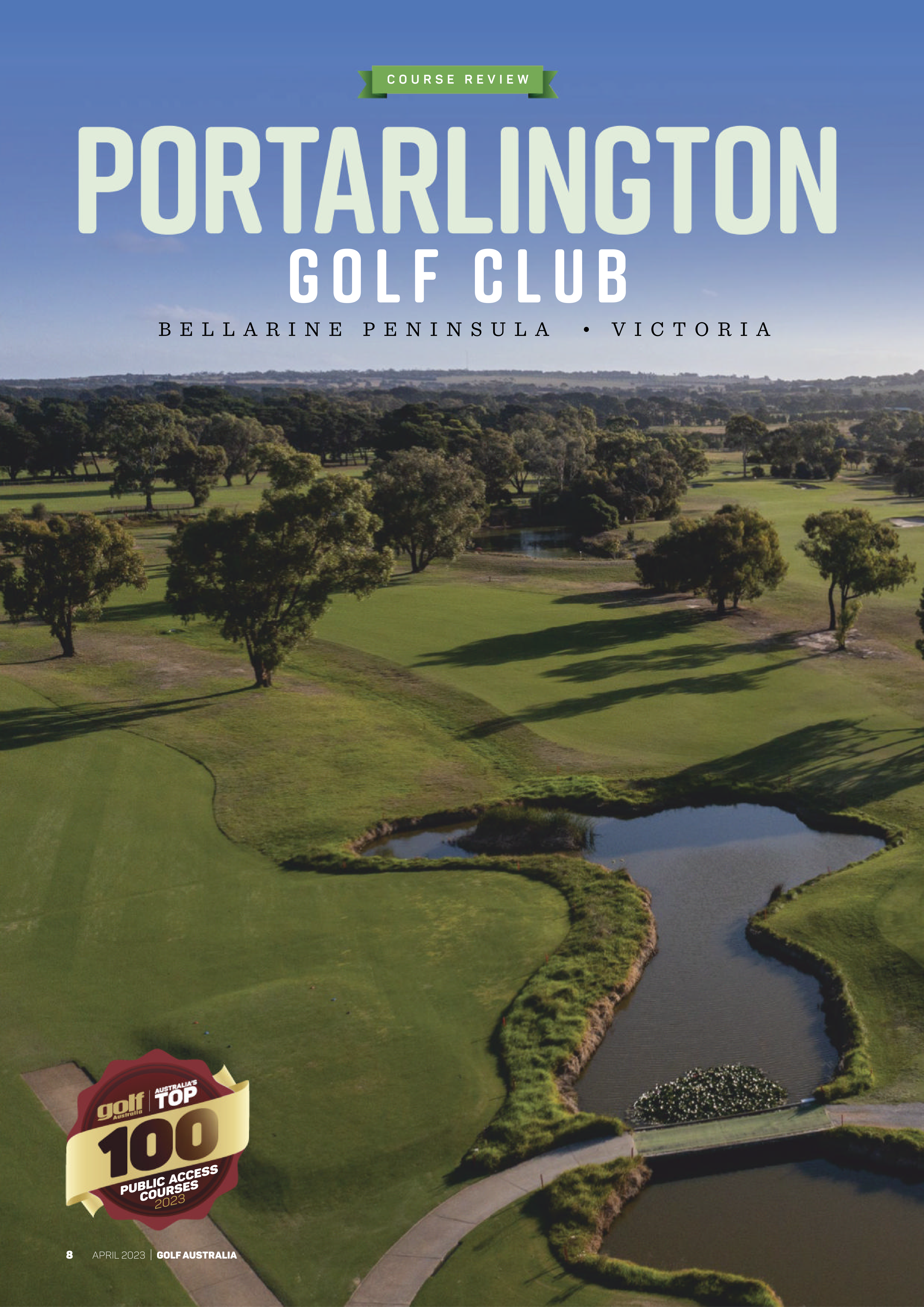


golf Australia AUSTRALIA'S TOP 100 PUBLIC ACCESS COURSES 2023

Portarlington is the latest Bellarine Peninsula club to crack a high ranking among the nation's best public access layouts, which is a long way from its roots as a nine-hole oil and bluestone scrapes course.

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY **BRENDAN JAMES**

The past 20 years have been a bullish period for golf on Victoria's Bellarine Peninsula.

New courses, extensively remodelled layouts and the world-class VicOpen Championship have put the peninsula on the global golfing map.

Portarlington is one of the region's long-established clubs and in recent years it has emerged as a major player in the elevation of the Bellarine as a 'must-visit' for golfers near and far.

The club celebrated its centenary in 2009 but it has improved significantly since then and in January this year it debuted at No.63 in *Golf Australia magazine's* Top-100 Public Access Courses ranking.

As I noted in that ranking: "Overlooked and underrated for several years, this Bellarine Peninsula gem makes its debut appearance in the Top-100 Public Access Courses ranking. Once you have picked your jaw off the floor over the quality of the fairways and greens, take a closer look at the design as there are some seriously good holes here. In fact, the closing six holes are worth the cost of the green fee alone."

Fellow judge Paul Wilson added: "Portarlington is a little slice of the Melbourne Sandbelt on the peninsula, with visually ▶

THE SHORT PAR-4 18TH HOLE DEMANDS ACCURACY TO AVOID WATER OR A TOUGH RECOVERY CHIP.

A MASSIVE DOUBLE GREEN IS SHARED BY THE OPENING HOLE FOR BOTH NINES.

> *PORTARLINGTON IS A LITTLE SLICE OF THE MELBOURNE SANDBELT ON THE BELLARINE PENINSULA …*
>
> ***– TOP-100 RANKING JUDGE, PAUL WILSON.***

attractive and intimidating bunkering as well as five-star quality couch fairways being the standout features of the layout."

But Portarlington's current high standing must have seemed like a pipe dream when the club was first established and then spent the best part of the next three decades moving to different sites around the town – from a six-hole waterside layout along The Esplanade in the centre of town to a nine-hole links near the then racecourse reserve on the western side of village. The latter was laid out in 1914 by then renowned Yarra Yarra Golf Club pro, Rowley Banks.

Financial struggles gripped the club during World War I and into the 1920s, but a permanent home on its current site was proposed and came into fruition in 1937. Fairways were carved out of the wattle trees and bracken fern with most of the material for the scrapes being gathered from a sand pit on the 6th fairway. The nine-hole oil and bluestone scrape course hosted its first rounds in September that year. The scrapes stayed in play for 20 years before all nine greens were converted to grass.

The club decided to expand to 18 holes in the early 1960s and, after purchasing adjoining land, approached the former curator at Point Lonsdale Golf Club, Eric Horne, to design the layout. He did the work for free and the full 18-hole layout was opened for play in 1963. He returned nearly a decade later to revise the layout when additional land became available. Further redesign was made again in the early 1980s.

But the most significant and beneficial changes to the layout came after the 1996 appointment of the renowned Tony Cashmore as the club's consulting course architect.

Bit-by-bit over the next 20 years, Cashmore oversaw his vision for the Portarlington layout. This included the upgrading of all fairways to Santa Ana couch grass, the rebuilding of several greens as well as the reshaping of fairways and bunkers. Several new tee positions were created while a program of tree removal was implemented.

All of Cashmore's extensive changes certainly improved the quality of the golfing experience at Portarlington. But it is the subtle tweaks to the layout since 2020, under advisement from consulting architects Neil Crafter and Paul Mogford, and the outstanding presentation of recent times that has seen the course surge into this magazine's national ranking.

Portarlington is an easy-walking par-72 layout where the driving lines are relatively narrow between tall stands of trees on most holes. In fact, the only real respite from the woodlands comes late in the back nine at the 15th and 16th holes. Cashmore oversaw the removal of many trees between the two holes and put a scheme of bunkers between the two rolling fairways.

The woodlands on the second paddock – where you will find the stretch of holes from the 4th to the 8th – have been thinned out over the years leaving wider fairways laid out in between.

Portarlington is the type of course that is well-suited to players who hit their iron shots well. Accuracy off the tee is important but all approach shots need to be precise to avoid bunkers and trimmed slopes feeding your ball away from the green into rough. ▶

THE PAR-3 2ND HOLE IS A FINE EXAMPLE OF PORTARLINGTON'S 'SANDBELT' SIMILARITIES.

A fine example of Portarlington's demand for approach shot precision comes at the outset of your round, which is a genuine birdie chance if you take a little risk along the way. Measuring just 260 metres from the tips, the par-4 1st hole can be played many ways as it offers a wide fairway with a large bunker to the right being the only real concern from the tee. But from the width of the fairway, it is important to dial in your approach to a narrow and deep section of a huge expanse of double green, shared with the 10th hole, lying between two large bunkers. Most will have a short iron or wedge in hand for the shot, which needs to be pinpoint for distance and accuracy.

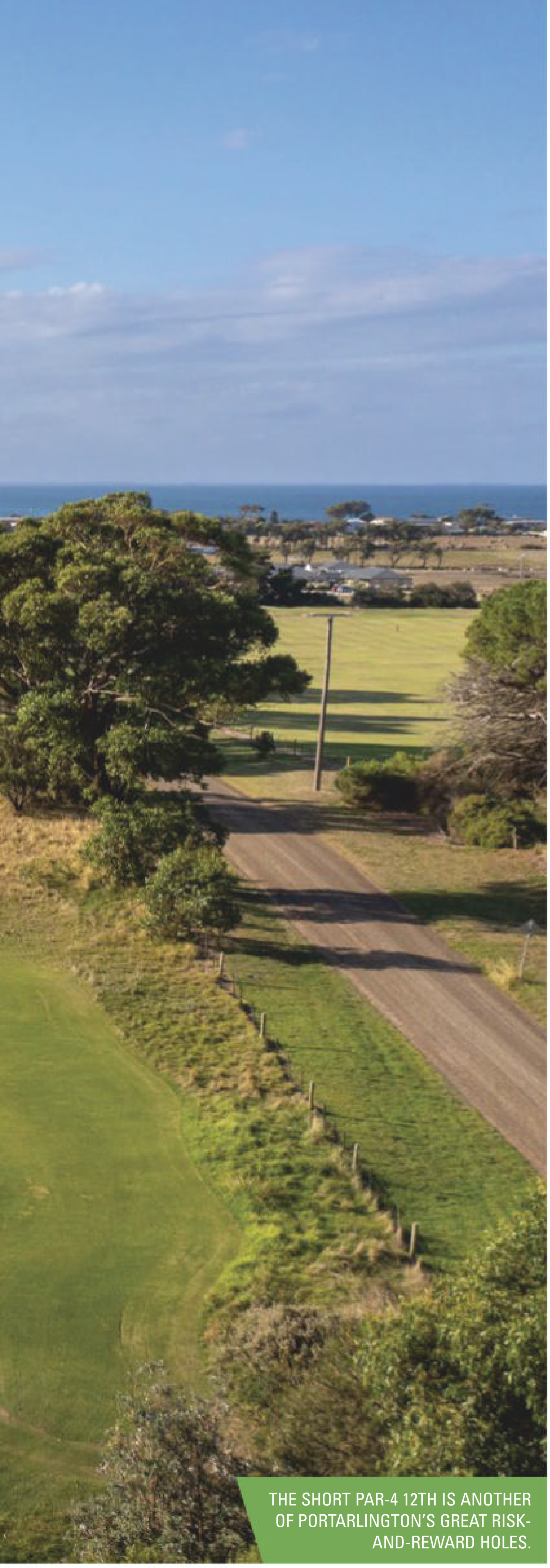
The par-3s at Portarlington are a definite highlight, which is not surprising considering Cashmore's past involvement.

The 177-metre 2nd was one of Cashmore's creations and what a gem it is. A snaking creek lines the left side of the hole and is only in play for the really bad mis-hit tee shot. The green is a big one with long breaks, while the right half of the putting surface is squeezed between two large bunkers – one short and another long. But it is the short-trimmed sloping surrounds, which have seemingly been influenced by the great set-ups of the Melbourne Sandbelt, that really impress here.

Another of the 'newish' holes is the par-3 5th with a large sloping green, a deep expansive bunker left and a pot bunker lying short and right. The putting surface is angled slightly to your approach and, while you might try and avoid the sandy hazards, a tee shot bouncing through the back of this green will leave a far more difficult recovery, especially from the tightly-mown areas.

These aren't the only holes where you will recognise a little slice of the Sandbelt has made its way to the Bellarine. Some of the bunkering throughout the course would look right at home there, while the green complexes and occasional stands of pine trees are reminiscent of what can be found across some of the Sandbelt's famed layouts.

One such hole that fits the Sandbelt comparison is the 330-metre par-4 12th. This is a cracking hole which was born out of redevelopment work carried out on the course in 2012 and has evolved into one of Portarlington's finest. This is a wonderful risk-and-reward hole where players looking for an easier second shot into the green need to navigate their way along the left edge of the fairway, which features three large bunkers



THE SHORT PAR-4 12TH IS ANOTHER OF PORTARLINGTON'S GREAT RISK-AND-REWARD HOLES.

CORRECT CLUB SELECTION AND ACCURACY ARE PARAMOUNT ON THE PAR-4 8TH HOLE.

THE SUN SETS OVER THE CASHMORE CRAFTED 15TH AND 16TH HOLES.

and out-of-bounds lurks beyond the tree line. The green sits diagonally to your approach with big bunkers short and long of the wide putting surface. Adding to the challenge of the approach shot is the well-trimmed drop-off slopes left and right, which will repel any mis-hit into deeper grass well away from the green.

Portarlington doesn't quite reach 6,000 metres in total from the tips but it doesn't need to be any longer. In fact, there are plans to alter the current par-5 9th hole, which will take a few metres off what I think is already a challenging excursion.

And while the design has evolved into an always fun layout to play, it is the condition of the couch fairways and bentgrass greens that are the real showstopper and are a credit to long-time course superintendent Steve Burchett and his team.

FACT FILE

LOCATION: Hood Rd, Portarlington, Bellarine Peninsula, Victoria.

CONTACT: (03) 5259 2492; (03) 5259 3361 (pro shop).

WEBSITE: www.port.golf

DESIGNERS: Eric Horne (1963), Tony Cashmore (1996-2020), Neil Crafter and Paul Mogford – Golf Strategies (2020 and ongoing).

PLAYING SURFACES: Bentgrass (greens), Santa Ana couch (fairways, tees).

COURSE SUPERINTENDENT: Steve Burchett.

PGA PROFESSIONALS: Matt Milne (head professional), Tyson Myers, Max Edmanson.

GREEN FEES: $55 (18 holes, weekdays), $65 (weekends).

MEMBERSHIP: There are plenty of membership options ranging from seven- and six-day memberships, through to lifestyle, intermediate, introductory as well as junior options. Check out the club's website for more details.

ACCOLADES: Ranked No.63 in *Golf Australia magazine's* Top-100 Public Access Courses for 2023.

BY GOLF AUSTRALIA COLUMNIST-AT-LARGE | **JOHN HUGGAN**

"IT IS HARD TO SEE THIS COLLECTION OF VERY RICH YOUNG MEN AS ANYTHING OTHER THAN OUT-OF-TOUCH ..."

When, like me, you are a member of the rapidly diminishing band of journalists charged with informing the world about golf and golfers, it is the question I hear most often: What is (invariably superstar) player X really like?

Almost every time my response is a shake of the head and, sometimes, a smile. Renowned swing coach Pete Cowen's long-ago quip also comes to mind. Asked about his dealings with the game's elite and the typically blunt Yorkshireman didn't even hesitate. "They all turn into '*&%$s' in the end," he said.

Now, while that may seem more than a little harsh, there is surely some truth contained therein. It's a depressing fact that, with one or two notable exceptions like Nick Price and Sandy Lyle, the men who rise to the statistical position of World No.1 do own personalities in which a sharp, uncompromising edge is featured, which is not so surprising when you think about it. Beating everyone else in such a highly competitive field requires a single-mindedness and ruthlessness possessed only by unusual individuals.

Anyway, all of which is but mere preamble to the news that, like so many recently, I binge-watched *Full Swing*, the eight-part *Netflix* series that claims to bring us the inside scoop on the PGA Tour. And yes, it had its moments. If you're like me, you'll come away from the experience liking Joel Dahmen and Tony Finau more than you did before. Likewise Matt Fitzpatrick, even if, like me, you kinda liked the U.S. Open champion anyway.

Other than that though … while Cowen's assessment remains at the extreme end of the likability scale, it is hard to see this collection of very rich young men as anything other than out-of-touch and utterly spoiled by the fact that society values so highly their esoteric ability to bat small balls around manicured fields with a collection of sticks.

There were very few laughs along the way. (Memo to *Netflix*: If you want to really entertain the public, do this whole thing again but on the DP World Tour. There you will find a collection of individuals who are doing well enough financially, but not to the extent that they have forgotten where they came from.) As one veteran member of what used to be the European Tour says, "most of the *Netflix* PGA Tour thing is flat and not reflective of life for 99.9 percent of professional golfers. Come with me in the queue for an EasyJet flight at 6am. That is the life most of us live."

Adding to my head-shaking was the somewhat unfortunate timing of the *Netflix* series' release. Within days we were treated to the unedifying spectacle of Tiger Woods slipping a female sanitary product to playing partner Justin Thomas during a tournament at Riviera. I'm not sure what the event is called now, but it used to be the L.A Open.

Anyway (2), that supposed "banter between friends", a form of mickey-taking in the wake of Woods outdriving his much-younger pal, is far more reflective of the level of "humour" that is the norm in PGA Tour locker rooms. Most of what goes on is, at best, adolescent in its level of thought. Indeed, it's a strange world, the locker room. It is amazing that there is room for anything in there beyond the oversized egos typically populating the PGA Tour.

Speaking of which, Ian Poulter makes an appearance in the *Netflix* series, which makes sense. Say what you like about the 47-year-old Englishman – and I often enough have – he is rarely anything other than interesting. While he can come across as a bit of a tool at times, there is much to admire about Poulter and how far he has gone in the game armed only with a talent-level well below that of many on Tour. But, even in the midst of his prevaricating with regard to his inevitable switch to the LIV Golf League, those behind the cameras even managed to suck the life out of one of golf's more engaging characters.

Poulter's segment did have one laugh-out-loud moment though, even if the mirth was of the ironic variety. The mournful music that played over the sight of Poulter, who had just missed a cut, jumping into the private jet that would take him back to this Florida mansion, was highly amusing, if only because it was so inappropriate. We were supposed to feel sorry for his lot? As my old Scottish granny used to say, "Aye, right".

Anyway (3), next time you come across a member of the golf-writing fraternity, feel free to ask about the elite, multi-millionaire golfer you find most intriguing. But be prepared to be disappointed (most times at least) by the answer. Pete Cowen wasn't too far wrong.

JUST ANOTHER JUSTIN THOMAS 'JUVENILE' MOMENT.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

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WHAT THE PROS SAY ABOUT PLAYING AT PORT...

> My best putting round in 43 years of professional golf ... it says a lot about the quality of the greens and (that) they were running perfectly.
>
> **Mike Harwood**

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>
> **Terry Price**

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NEWS & VIEWS

THE NATIONAL

NEW SEASON FINALE TO DETERMINE TRAVELLING TRIO

There is a new event on the ISPS Handa PGA Tour of Australasia calendar for 2023.

The National will be played at The National Golf Club's Moonah Course on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula from March 30 to April 2. The event will be the finale for the PGA Tour of Australasia's 16-event season with a purse of $200,000 on offer.

Beyond the opportunities on offer for the field, the event, which has been confirmed for the next three years as part of the schedule with a hope to become a Tour Championship of sorts, gives one of the top courses in the country a chance to shine on a big stage.

The Moonah layout – designed by Greg Norman and Bob Harrison – is one of three courses on The National's Cape Schanck property and was ranked as the 12th best in country by *Golf Australia magazine* in the 2022 Top-100 Courses list.

"The Moonah Course is a fun, testing layout of great merit. Subject to the winds of the Mornington Peninsula, the challenge is never too far away," Top-100 panellist Matt Mollica said. "The playing surfaces are great despite high traffic, with the couch fescue fairways are among Australia's best. The course rewards long straight driving, and a little ingenuity around the greens."

A chance to win on Tour will be high on the list of those descending on the Mornington Peninsula area, however, there will be many in the field with more than an eye on the Order of Merit standings that conclude at The National.

Moving on from a ranking based on total prizemoney, the Tour has implemented a points based system designed to provide a more equitable platform for the best performers over the course of the season. The top players in the standings rewarded by the ongoing pathway opportunities that have become a primary focus for PGA Tour ▶

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

VICTORIA'S DAVID MICHELUZZI HAS HAD A SUMMER TO REMEMBER AND LEADS THE ORDER OF MERIT.

of Australasia.

The top three players, not already exempt, will gain a DP World Tour card with No.1 also earning a start at the 151st Open Championship at Royal Liverpool. The next three receive an invite to the final stage of the DP World Tour qualifying school, while the top five players also receive an invite to the final stage of the Korn Ferry Tour qualifying school in the United States.

The player more than likely to take the lion's share of the spoils on offer at the time of writing kicked off the season in style, with Victorian David Micheluzzi claiming his first professional victory in Kalgoorlie at the WA PGA Championship. Micheluzzi now a two-time winner after his triumph at the Webex Players Series Sydney, when he bolted home with a Sunday 61 too pull away at the top of the Order of Merit and all but secure his spot in Europe for the 2024 season.

"If I do play well and do get one of those three cards, and if not win, I'll be stoked, an awesome season after what happened a couple of years ago, I wasn't playing that great, to be here now, I'm just stoked," Micheluzzi told *Golf Australia magazine*.

Micheluzzi has previously attempted to find his way onto bigger overseas Tours via the traditional qualifying school route without success.

Attempting DP World Tour qualifying early in his play-for-pay career then trying once again to earn his way onto the Korn Ferry Tour, the now-26-year-old had little joy and instead looked homeward for a way to advance his career.

"I'd back myself over a season rather than just one week … worst comes to worst I don't get my card, and that's fine by me, I know I've had a pretty good season and my games trending," Micheluzzi said.

"I've done Q Schools in the past, I'm hopeless at them. I did well at Aussie Q-School just because I know the course really well, but I did Korn Ferry Q-School and missed that first stage, I did final stage European in 2019 when I just turned pro and played awful there. I almost came last … just the added pressure of knowing that one week is going to dictate your year, good or bad."

With a plan to "go flat-out" following his most recent win at Bonnie Doon *(pictured top right)* to extend his advantage on the points list, Micheluzzi will likely have his DP World Tour card signed and sealed by the time he arrives at The National. However, the race for the other two cards on offer will make for an exciting conclusion to the season.

Andrew Martin is currently in the box seat for the next available card and nipping at his heals are Tom Power-Horan and Deyen Lawson *(pictured top left)*, all three having played the bulk of the season, while Kiwi veteran Michael Hendry is also lurking following his win at the Vic Open.

The winners of big events, such as Cam Smith at the Australian PGA, not qualifying due to the requirement to play four events of the Tour schedule.

Playing on a Tour with such rich history is a dream for any golfer, and Micheluzzi concedes he has at times allowed himself to think about what could be over the coming months, despite knowing the job is far from done until The National is run and won.

"It'd be awesome, like just to know for next year that there is a job, we probably won't get all of the events, like the Rolex series events and the bigger DP World Tour events, but it's a category, so I'm pretty pleased with that, if that can happen."

– Callum Hill

> "IF I DO PLAY WELL AND DO GET ONE OF THOSE THREE CARDS, AND IF NOT WIN, I'LL BE STOKED …"
>
> **– DAVID MICHELUZZI**

THE HIGHLY RANKED MOONAH COURSE AT THE NATIONAL GC.

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OPPOSING VIEWS

GIVING THE GAME'S HISTORY A FACELIFT

bad

BRENDAN JAMES
Golf Australia Editor

In an extraordinary lapse in judgement, the St Andrews Links Trust painted a moustache on the Mona Lisa, stood back and admired its work with pride.

Then, when a single photo of the 'new' Swilcan Bridge patio found its way onto the internet, the proverbial faecal matter hit the fan. The patio was gone a few days later and replaced with turf.

While the Trust certainly had the best of intentions, it quickly learned, golfers – particularly hardcore passionate ones – don't like change, especially when it comes to the game's history and its landmarks.

The Swilcan Bridge, dating back hundreds of years, is the most famous in the game. Tinkering with it, no matter what the reason, was always going to draw widespread criticism.

It would be like putting a water hazard in front of the green on Royal Melbourne West's 5th hole to get rid of the dirt track that cuts across the hole. Or lowering the wall by a foot on North Berwick's iconic 13th hole, so golfers had a slightly better view of the green. Nonsense right!

So, hands off golf's landmarks. Let them be for posterity.

good (ish)

JIMMY EMANUEL
Golf Australia magazine Deputy & Digital Editor

Don't worry, I am firmly in the camp of an ideal world where the Old Course remains untouched. And we wouldn't even be having this debate regarding a few tiles being laid on one of the most famous spots in golf.

Yet in an era when The Open Championship sees players teeing off from spots that are out of bounds when typically playing the Old Course, is a maintenance and convenience measure really worthy of such an overzealous reaction when it reached social media channels. It was enough of a reaction to prompt the St Andrews Links Trust to rip up the 'patio' just a few days after the pavers were laid.

It was such an overwhelming reaction you would have thought they started using drop in cricket pitches at the MCG!

Hang on, you're saying they do?

Whereas the pitch at 'The G' is part of the playing surface, only the most hapless golfer was going to come across the new pavers at St Andrews in the course of play. The new, and admittedly unsightly, stonework was actually put in place to avoid people missing their "Swilcan Bridge moment" as has been the case in the past.

Understandably, every person heads for the burn crossing for a picture whether they are playing or not. This walk combined with the most common standing area for their photographer creating the wear and constant returfing the Trust is trying to avoid.

The process of replacing turf, means the Swilcan is closed at times during the year, and I think it would be fair to assume the subjects of these photos would prefer to get a shot with the new work cut out rather than miss their chance.

On the subject of photos, look back at all the best shots of golfers atop the famous bridge and the area in question isn't in the frame. Let alone the fact that AstroTurf has been tried before or, according to the Links Trust, there was once stones in the area.

Sure, the Trust have enough money to rip up and replace the worn turf, but in a world where we are trying to be more sustainable and remove golf's image problem of resource and money waste, this is the prudent move.

Augusta National uses synthetic grass on the Hogan and other bridges, so while this might be a slight afront to the senses, it really is nothing new.

History is important, and it is still the old same bridge. Those that lost their minds over this whole thing, can I suggest rather than pavers you focus on another 'P' word … perspective.

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES; TWITTER (INSERT)

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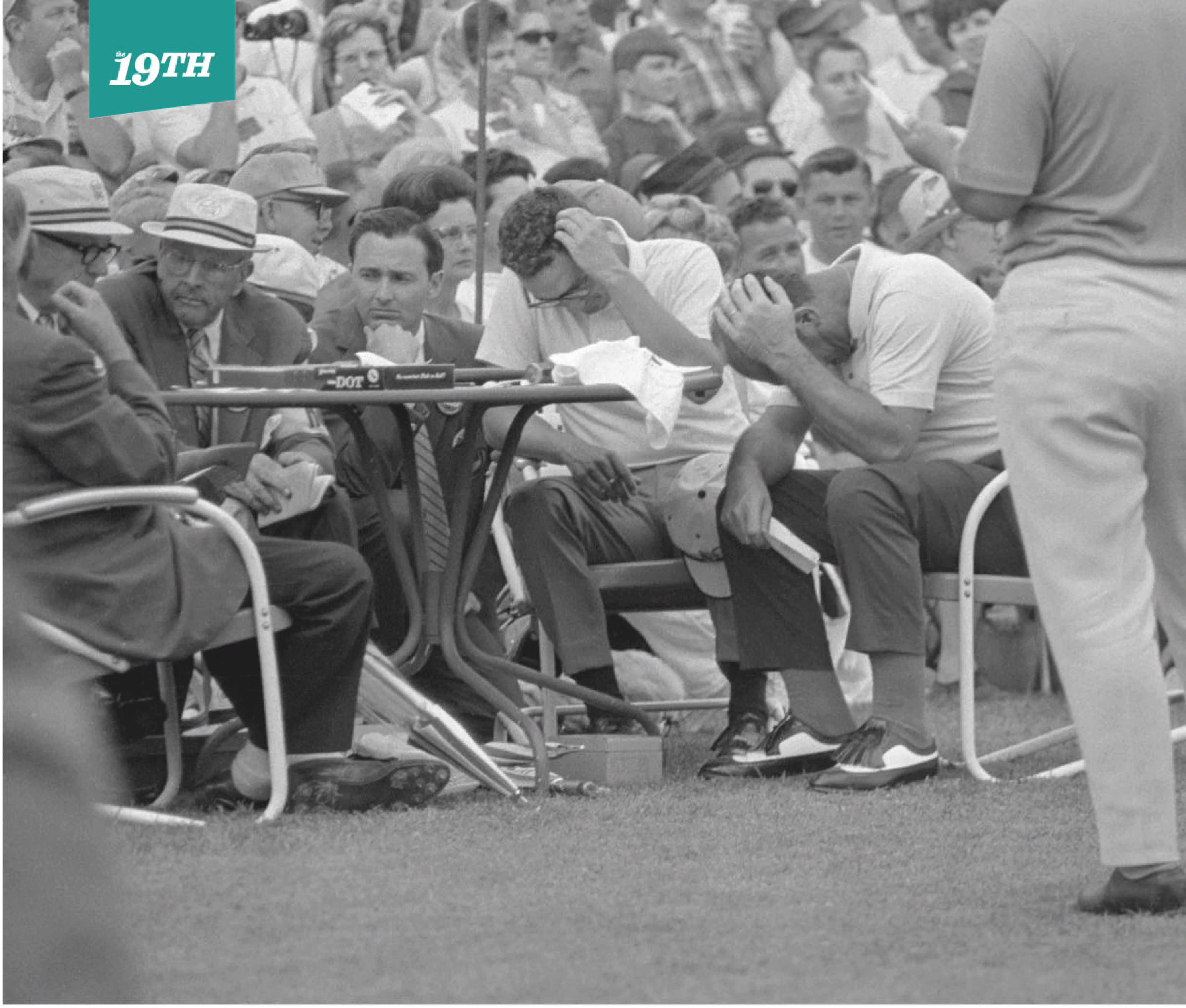

FROM THE VAULT

ROBERTO'S 'SLIP OF THE PEN'

APRIL 14, 1968

The smooth move of Argentinian Roberto De Vicenzo led him to more than 230 wins worldwide, including a victory at the 1967 Open Championship where he managed to fight off golfing royalty in Gary Player and Jack Nicklaus.

However, De Vicenzo's biggest moment in the spotlight came on the hallowed turf of Augusta National in 1968.

De Vicenzo was a student of the game, becoming a caddy at his local, Ranelagh Golf Club, on the outskirts of Buenos Aries at eight-years-old. The course would later be named after him as a tribute to his service

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES X 2

to the game of golf, not only in the area, but around the globe. Golf in Argentina was largely a minority sport; therefore, De Vicenzo would mainly loop for ex-pat Englishmen.

He and his friends picked up the sport in an obscure way. De Vicenzo taught himself how to play with a tree-branch and an improvised cork ball. He credits the exceptional ball control he portrayed during the course of his career to this simplistic way of learning, as the cork ball could go anywhere if it caught a gust of wind. He and his friends would pick a nearby target and play for 10-cent bets, as that was how much it cost to go to the movies.

Coming off the back of a successful 1967 season where the 44-year-old De Vicenzo finally got his moment in the sun at a major championship, hoisting the Claret Jug at Royal Liverpool to become the Champion Golfer of the year. To make the win even sweeter, a trip to a local bookmaker on the eve of the tournament saw De Vicenzo increase his winning purse times 12, after placing a bet on himself at 70/1.

Arriving at Magnolia Lane as the Open Champion, expectations were high and De Vicenzo did not disappoint, carding a first round 69, following it up with a second round 73 on what was a tough day for scoring. De Vicenzo comfortably secured himself a weekend tee-time, and was one of the main international dangers alongside Australian Bruce Devlin, among a host of local favourites including Bob Goalby, Frank Beard, Bert Yancey, Tommy Aaron and Nicklaus. A solid two-under 70 on Saturday gave De Vicenzo the momentum heading into the Sunday's final round.

Paired with American Aaron, the Argentinian put on a ball-striking exhibition as he plotted himself around Augusta brilliantly. Looking to celebrate his 45th birthday with a Green Jacket, De Vicenzo kicked off with a statement on the 1st, making a brilliant eagle two when he holed out from 135 yards. He would then cash in birdies on both of the front nine par-5s, and another at the short par-4 3rd hole, which at that point would see him four-under through three holes.

It seemed a two-horse race heading to the turn, between De Vicenzo and the American journeyman pro Goalby. De Vicenzo played the back nine three-under to post an impressive final round 65. It was off to the scorer's hut, which in 1968 was just a picnic table off the back of the 18th green.

De Vicenzo and Aaron went through the routine formalities that occur post round. Their scorecards were signed and it seemed as if De Vicenzo and Goalby were coming back on Monday for an 18-hole play-off. Goalby arrived at the scorer's table soon after to congratulate De Vicenzo and said he would see him tomorrow. But as it had turned out, Aaron, who was marking De Vicenzo's scorecard, had pencilled De Vicenzo down for a four on the par-4 17th hole, where he had actually made a birdie three. With the adrenaline still pumping after thinking he had booked himself a spot in a play-off the following day, De Vicenzo signed the card without double checking, which meant the 66 he signed for had to stand, leaving him one shot back from Goalby.

"I have played golf for many, many years and just about all over the world … I have signed many cards, and none of them wrong. All I can say is what a stupid I am to be wrong in this wonderful tournament," De Vicenzo famously stated in broken English following the final round disappointment.

Nowadays players can request their score be double checked by someone before they sign their card, therefore, minimising the chance of something like this happening. If De Vincenzo had signed for a score lower than what he had actually scored, the penalty would have been disqualification.

The story doing the rounds in the press was Goalby did not win The Masters, but De Vicenzo lost it by the slip of a pen. This isn't entirely true, as we will never know what the result of that play-off would have been.

Ironically, five years later Aaron slipped his shoulders through the sleeves of his own Green Jacket, when he became the 1973 Masters Champion.

De Vicenzo would put in a few more solid displays at Major Championships, finishing T10 at the 1968 Open Championship and third in 1969, finishing T3 three shots behind Tony Jacklin.

The Argentinian later became one of the pioneers of the Senior PGA Tour, where he won the inaugural U.S Senior Open in 1980, which would be his lone senior Major despite some close calls.

LOCKER ROOM CHAT

'I'M GRATEFUL TO LIV GOLF FOR GIVING ME A CHANCE'

Andy Ogletree on being banned, picking sides, and why he owes Greg Norman

You won for the first time on the Asian Tour, were suspended by the PGA Tour, and axed from LIV Golf after one event. How do you reflect on everything that happened to you last year?

It was a very interesting year, even going further back than that, over the last year and a half, two years. I turned pro a week after the Masters in 2020 and everything was going great. I got seven exemptions on the PGA Tour, played four and then had to forgo the rest to have hip surgery.

I spent six months rehabbing, got myself ready and came back to play Q-School. We got to the final stage and I pulled a muscle in my elbow right before I teed off. I finished, like, 115th so I became a Korn Ferry Tour 'member' but I didn't get into any tournaments based on that status.

It was a long process so when the LIV Golf opportunity presented itself, that gave me Asian Tour status for the year and somewhere to play. I've been able to turn my game around, based on those experiences, so it turned out to be a good year.

Has the step up to the pro ranks been harder than you expected?

Well, I've spent a lot of time rehabbing and I haven't been able to play a consistent schedule or find any structure. But now that I have status and can pick and choose where I play, I finally feel like a pro golfer. That's why I'm grateful to LIV Golf, for giving me an opportunity.

So playing LIV was need rather than greed at the time?

I needed somewhere to play golf. I was playing mini tour events in America, travelling all across the country, trying to find places to play. That week (at Centurion), I didn't have a Monday qualifier so I saw it as an opportunity to play golf.

But then you were never invited back after the first event. Did they ever give you a reason?

Unfortunately for me, I didn't play well in the first tournament and that probably had something to do with their decision. Right, wrong or indifferent, that's just what they chose to do.

Were you surprised by the PGA Tour's decision to suspend you from all affiliated Tours?

They told me every situation is looked at differently. But I was pretty disappointed to find myself on the same list as Phil Mickelson and DJ, because my situation was a lot different. I've never even played a Korn Ferry event, yet I was banned from the Tour. I understand they're trying to protect their brand and image, but I wasn't receiving a benefit. I paid $6,500 to go to Q-School in 2021.

I was able to get 'Korn Ferry Tour status' but that didn't get me in any of the tournaments and yet they were able to control my media rights and control where I played.

Were you prevented from entering Q School last year?

Yeah, I was suspended through (to) December 31.

Will you keep playing the Asian Tour?

I've got Asian Tour status until the end of 2024. For now the plan is to play there and whatever results from that, I will make the best decision for me.

Would you be open to returning to the LIV Golf or do you see your future on the PGA Tour?

I'd love to play either Tour, they're both great, but I'll just see which opportunity presents itself first.

OGLETREE'S ROLLERCOASTER RIDE

- After helping the US team to victory in the 2019 Walker Cup, Ogletree won the US Amateur and finished T34 at the 2020 Masters to win Low Amateur honours.
- Soon after turning pro, in late 2020, he spent six months on the sidelines with a torn labrum and then failed to secure any guaranteed starts on the Korn Ferry Tour for the 2022 season.
- He was suspended from playing in PGA Tour-affiliated tournaments until 2023 after signing up to play in the first LIV Golf Invitational at Centurion. He finished last on 24-over-par out of the 48-field event, yet still received $120,000 for his efforts.
- The 24-year-old Mississippian shot a final-round 62 to claim his first pro win at last November's International Series Egypt on the Asian Tour before winning its Qatar event in February this year.

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THE REVIEW WITH ADRIAN LOGUE

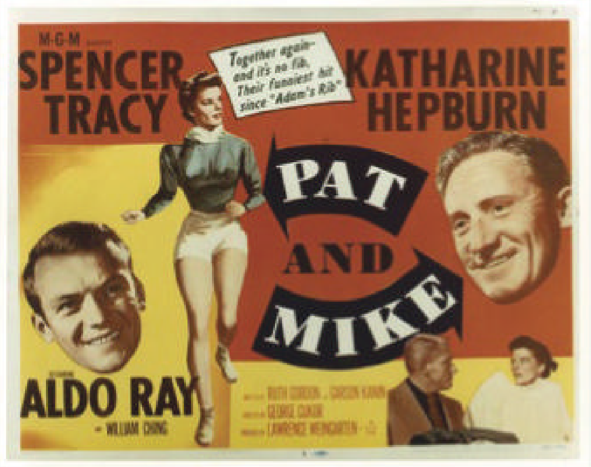
PAT AND MIKE (1952)

A good sports movie is rare. Even rarer is a good golf movie, rarer still is a good golf movie featuring women's golf. Most unlikely of all is that such a movie existed 70 years ago, and yet we have *Pat and Mike* (1952).

Pat Pemberton (Katherine Hepburn) is a college women's athletic coach and a talented multi-sport athlete in her own right. What seems like a routine day of work and golf with her overbearing fiancé Collier Weld (William Ching) becomes a turning point in her life when she rebels at his insistence on throwing a money match with a boastful college donor. Observing her obvious talent, the local club pro convinces her to compete in the Women's National Matchplay Championship.

There she is noticed by unscrupulous sports agent Mike Conovan (Spencer Tracy) who tries to bribe her into throwing the final against real world multi-sports athlete and champion golfer Babe Zaharias. Pat refuses to take part in Mike's grift but nonetheless loses a winning lead in the final when she's discombobulated by the appearance of fiancé Collier in the crowd.

Still impressed with her skills, Mike confronts her after the match and re-frames his offer to be her agent, now supposedly without the grift – "legitimate you know … yeah … a lady athlete properly handled … always a market!"



Arriving at another turning point in her life, Pat is now faced with a struggle to define her identity before a major life decision – marriage to Collier – which would commit her to a future of being his stay-at-home little lady.

In a sudden moment of insight she abruptly throws her luggage out the window of a moving train and leaves a flummoxed Collier as she jumps off said train and into a new life as one of Mike's stable of athletes that includes promising boxer Davie Hucko (Aldo Ray) and a racehorse 'Little Nell'.

Pat turns pro and quickly finds success across golf, tennis and shooting as her and Mike take on shady mobster gamblers (including a young Charles Bronson), have a run in with the police and – inevitably – develop feelings for each other.

Along the way they employ various tactics to defy Collier's attempts at coming to Pat's events where his mere presence bamboozles her into a poor performance. An interesting phenomenon of sports

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES X 3

psychology that underpins the main premise of the story.

Director George Cukor, who also directed *Gaslight* (1944) would become known for his subversive portrayal of contemporary proto-feminist themes. While ostensibly a romantic comedy, *Pat and Mike* also returns to one of Cukor's recurring subjects – that of the woman trapped by marriage. In it we're shown self-absorbed Collier somehow not seeing or acknowledging the extraordinary skills of his wife to be. He views them more as an amusing distraction that amplifies his importance while he undermines her confidence as a way of increasing her need for his approval (these days known as 'negging').

IS IT A GOLF MOVIE?

This is the seventh of Katherine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy's nine movies together and the second along with *Adam's Rib* (1949) in which they teamed with director Cukor and husband-and-wife writers Garson Kanin and Ruth Gordon who were real-life friends of off-screen couple Hepburn and Tracy. They wrote the Oscar nominated screenplay specifically for Hepburn to show off her sporting prowess and Hepburn considers it her favourite of the films she did together with Tracy.

And Hepburn was indeed a fine golfer, she'd taken lessons from an early age at Fenwick Golf Club in Old Saybrook and competed in local and state tournaments with some success. After retiring from movies, she continued to play golf and lived next to the 14th hole at Bel-Air Country Club where (as the story goes) Hepburn had been courted by fellow golfer Howard Hughes who, late for their date, piloted his plane down onto one of the fairways and proceeded to produce his golf bag and complete a round alongside her.

BUT DO THEY "GET GOLF"?

The golf and tennis sequences in *Pat and Mike* are afforded surprisingly generous screentime and director Cukor tells the story of the sporting contests with an efficient economy of camera movements. To modern eyes jaundiced by rapid cuts and choppy editing, the golf scenes in *Pat and Mike* look luscious and unhurried in comparison.

A famous photo of Hepburn playing golf during the production of the movie hangs on the wall at Riviera Country Club where many of the golf scenes were filmed. Even in black and white the familiar vistas of Riviera provide an exciting backdrop to the competitive tension of the narrative being played out on screen.

Even more bold is the choice to show off Hepburn's obvious proficiency alongside some of the best real-world golfers of the time including Babe Zaharias, Betty Hicks, Helen Detweiler and Beverly Hanson. The tennis scenes also feature professionals Gussie Moran and Alice Marble.

Interestingly (but not surprisingly for Cukor) the film almost serves as a documentary of women's sports of the era. We see that women's contests were often promoted as exhibition matches alongside more serious men's competitions but for the biggest women's events there were huge crowds and legitimate superstars among the women, who forged a path in sports with their skills and desire to compete.

SHOULD YOU WATCH IT?

The writing and directing team behind *Pat and Mike* ensure it is one of the better Hepburn/Tracy collaborations. Their effortless on-screen chemistry lends a physical and verbal magic to their every interaction.

Reportedly upon their initial meeting on the set of *Woman of the Year* (1942) Hepburn's first words to Tracy were, "I am too tall for you" to which producer Joe Mankiewicz replied, "Don't worry, honey. He'll soon cut you down to size."

In fact, Hepburn's spunky character is contained but not diminished by the rumpled, non-conformist Tracy who if not classically handsome is incredibly interesting to look at. He adores Hepburn in a way that is both dominating and deferential. They're both just so ridiculously charismatic in their scenes together.

Pat and Mike is a well-paced, easy watch that has aged quite well. The stakes are never too high and despite some noirish themes nobody is ever in a truly threatening situation. The comedy is more of a subdued chortle than laugh-out-loud slapstick and the romance is mostly suggested and not shown. However, as far as golf movies go it is a rare combination of efficient storytelling, knowledgeable golf depiction and charming performances. One to watch and rewatch every few years.

MOVIE RATING: ★★★★
GOLF RATING: 4 pieces of luggage thrown off a moving train
WHERE TO WATCH IT:
Available to rent or buy on Apple TV, Amazon Prime

FLASHBACK

MARCH 22, 1934

When Bobby Jones captured golf's 'Grand Slam' – winning the U.S Open, The Open Championship, U.S Amateur and British Amateur all in 1930 – he promptly announced his retirement from the sport.

It brought to an end one of the most decorated golf careers in history, which include seven Major Championships, as well as six British and U.S Amateur titles, which were classed as majors at the time.

Jones then set his sights on his next project; co-designing Augusta National with Dr Alister MacKenzie in the spring of 1931. The course was opened in 1933 and the first event was played the following year, the 1934 Augusta National Invitational, which would later become The Masters.

Jones came out of retirement to be the main drawcard for the inaugural event, which was played from March 22 to 25, 1934. It was a move that proved crucial for the long-term success of the tournament. He was a celebrity and attracted plenty of media coverage, which ultimately helped attract the biggest names in golf to Augusta to contend.

The tournament was an instant success. Jones finished T13, with American Horton Smith crowned the inaugural Augusta National Invitational Champion. This was later changed to recognise him as the first Masters Champion. ●

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES X 2

IN MY OPINION

EXCLUSIVE BY **GEOFF OGILVY** | GOLF AUSTRALIA COLUMNIST

"I WANT TO PLAY. BUT I DON'T GO TO BED AT NIGHT 'NEEDING' TO PLAY LIKE I DID WHEN I WAS YOUNGER."

I have no doubt that this little fact escaped the notice of most people, but early this year I played all four rounds in the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am on the PGA Tour.

Making the cut there was nice, of course, given the event was my first appearance at that level in almost a year. But making it to the last day actually had a wider significance. I jumped maybe 50 places on the list of exemption categories, high enough to gain a place in the Honda Classic (what was actually my 400th start on the PGA Tour) and, one week later, at the Puerto Rico Open.

All of which is clearly pleasing, especially as my form in Australia at the back end of last year hadn't really been that great. Plus, I hadn't been practising much. But asking for an invitation to the AT&T made sense, if only because I'm going to be spending a lot more time in the U.S over the coming months. And I have to say it was fun being back.

It is funny how perspectives can change. When you've been playing 25-30 weeks a year for five years, playing in a four-day pro-am can feel like a bit of a grind. The weather there is invariably wet and cold – it was again this year – the play tends to be on the slow side and the greens are typically a bit bumpy. I can remember a time when all of those things might have seen me looking elsewhere for something to do that week.

But not this year. I had a great time. The weather was awful. There were delays. It was cold and windy too. But I played okay. And I got a huge break on the third day at the Monterey Peninsula Country Club. When we started it was dead still. But halfway through the round, it went from a 5mph wind to a 40mph gale. But when we got to the 8th green the siren went to halt play. And when we came back the next day conditions had improved enormously. So I got lucky there.

Anyway, I ended up earning US$17,730, which is outrageous. I mean, I finished 74th in the tournament. I've been gone from the PGA Tour for maybe three or four years, but to be paid that much for that finish opened my eyes to how much the guys are playing for these days. When I first turned pro and was playing in Europe, a 74th-place finish

OGILVY PLANS TO COMPETE MORE ON THE PGA TOUR IN 2023.

PHOTOS: AUSTRALIAN GOLF MEDIA; GETTY IMAGES

would have been paid "reserve money," normally about £500. That didn't even cover the hotel for the week.

Of course, money is not the greatest way to compare players. Not too long ago, there wasn't that much difference between the big events and the not-so big events. Now, with the introduction of the "elevated" tournaments on the PGA Tour, there is a much bigger range in prizemoney. The two events following Pebble Beach both had three times as much prizemoney.

Still, forget the cash, what turned out to be important was the elevation in my exemption status on the PGA Tour. It's not great obviously, but it is better than it was. Because I made that cut, my chances of getting into more PGA Tour events this year – and scratching the itch I still have to play – are improved.

As to how many events I would like to play, I haven't really decided. My ideal is that I get to play golf every day while I am based in Arizona for a while. But travelling around the world for 25 weeks doesn't sound incredibly appealing. The reality is that – unless I win a tournament – I'll get into maybe a dozen events this year. That is fine and will be fun. Especially if my form improves.

Don't get me wrong. I want to play. But I don't go to bed at night "needing" to play like I did when I was younger. Then again, not doing it for three or four years, reminded me that playing professional golf is a really good job. It's a fun thing to do. Satisfying. And it's not work. Not really. But the game continues to give me a purpose in life. That side of things I really like, even as I've been doing so many other things the last few years. The reality is that I'm a golfer.

One thing that did occupy my brain in recent times was waking up in the morning and not having golf to work on. Since the age of 18, every decision I've made in my professional life was geared towards playing better. Even what I ate. I would avoid certain foods at dinner because I knew I wouldn't feel as good as possible the next morning. Likewise, the extra glass of wine, going or not going to the gym, where I lived. It was all based on what would make me a better golfer.

When you've always had that, then it's not there anymore, I can't say life is bad. But it's different. Which is why I'm happy to have inserted a bit of purpose in 2023 going forward.

Ah, but I have to be honest even as I say that. I've never played a Korn Ferry Tour event in the States. And I don't hear too many good reports from guys who are in similar positions to myself. It's a great place to be when you're young and on the way up. But when you've played as many events as I have, that isn't so true. There's no real prizemoney. The courses are a step down from those you see on the PGA Tour. And the events are invariably putting contests. So, while I'm not saying "never," right now my inclination is to stay away from that.

MAKING THE CUT AT PEBBLE BEACH HAS OPENED THE DOOR FOR MORE STARTS IN THE U.S THIS YEAR.

The bottom line is that I just want to play, hopefully get in the mix and "feel it" all again. That's the high or the drug for me – having a chance to win.

So I would have a hard time getting "up" for events below the top level. Having said that, I have seen guys like me in their mid-40s play in everything and anything just to stay sharp for when they turn 50 and become eligible for seniors golf. I've heard all the theories and the strategies over the last 30 years but take it from me: there is no substitute for simply playing golf if you want to get better.

I know the trend amongst the elite players is to compete less rather than more. But I still believe that everyone from the very best down would be even better if they played more. I'm going to do that this year, even if it is just money-games with fellow pros. It's not quite a "comeback," but I want to do what I know I can do.

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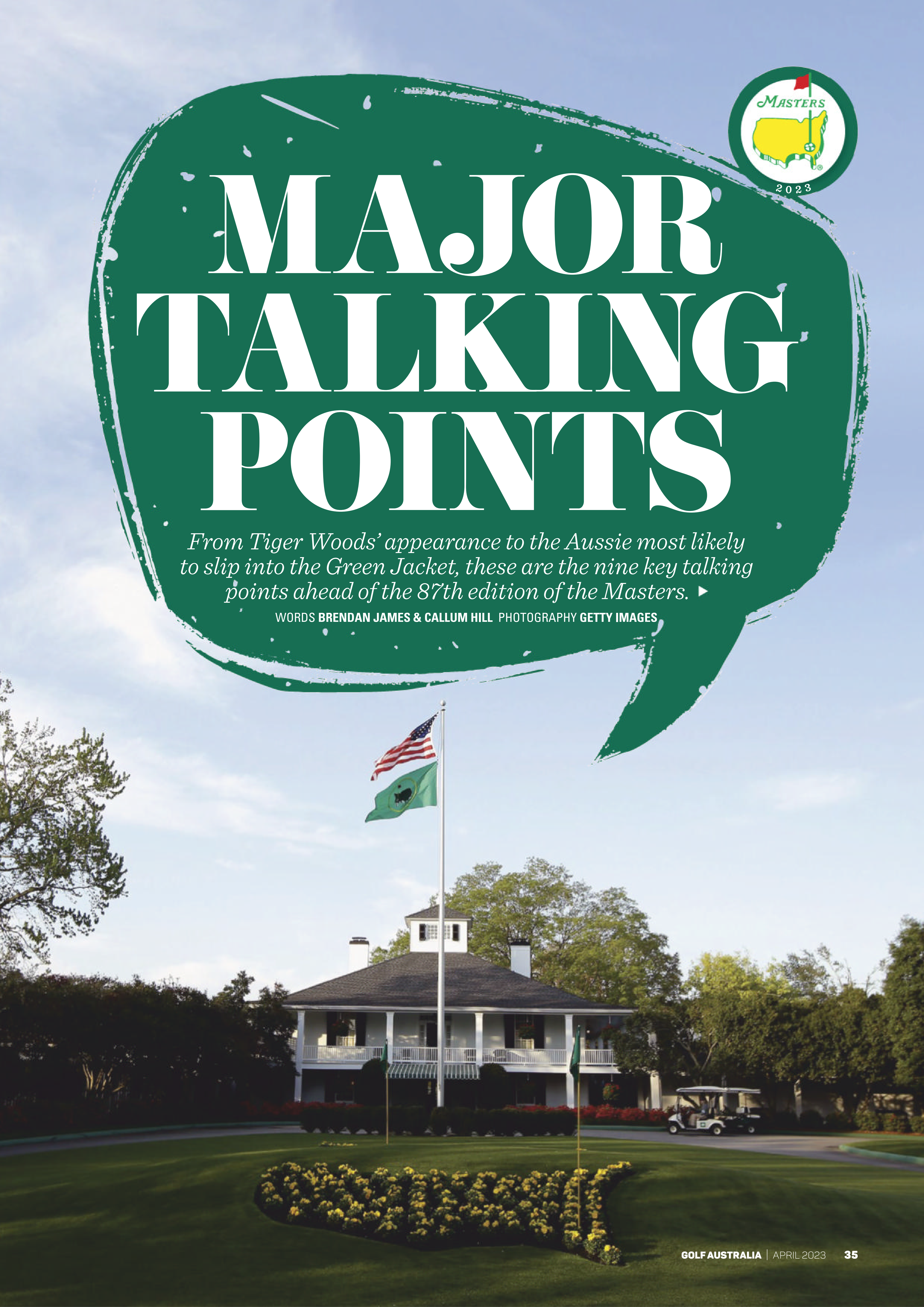
MAJOR TALKING POINTS

From Tiger Woods' appearance to the Aussie most likely to slip into the Green Jacket, these are the nine key talking points ahead of the 87th edition of the Masters. ▸

WORDS **BRENDAN JAMES & CALLUM HILL** PHOTOGRAPHY **GETTY IMAGES**



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1

CAN SCHEFFLER GO BACK-TO-BACK?

In the 86 editions of the Masters played since 1934, only three defending champions – Jack Nicklaus (1965-66), Nick Faldo (1989-90) and Tiger Woods (2001-02) – have won back-to-back Masters titles.

All three belong among the elite known as Augusta specialists – when they weren't winning they were, more often than not, well in contention.

What makes an Augusta specialist?

These days – with faster and firmer putting surfaces – a left-to-right (for right-handers) shot-shape and high ball trajectory, combined with good course knowledge, are the common thread of all Augusta specialists.

Hideki Matsuyama, the 2021 Masters Champion, finished T27 and was low amateur on debut in 2011 and since 2015 he hasn't missed a cut. He's a specialist.

As is the man he slipped a green jacket onto in 2022 – Scottie Scheffler, who broke through at Augusta in just his third Masters start.

Scheffler's three-stroke victory came at the end of a phenomenal run of form, which began with his first PGA Tour win at the Phoenix Open in mid-February and followed with two more victories in March and ended with his maiden major win at Augusta.

The 26-year-old, with his natural high fading shot shape will see him contend at Augusta for many years to come, but he will have to overcome history to join the likes of Nicklaus, Faldo and Woods.

Defending at Augusta National is tough, as four of the past seven defending champions will testify as they missed the cut. In fact, only four of the past 21 winners have finished in the top-10 the following year.

2

WILL TIGER MAKE AN IMPACT?

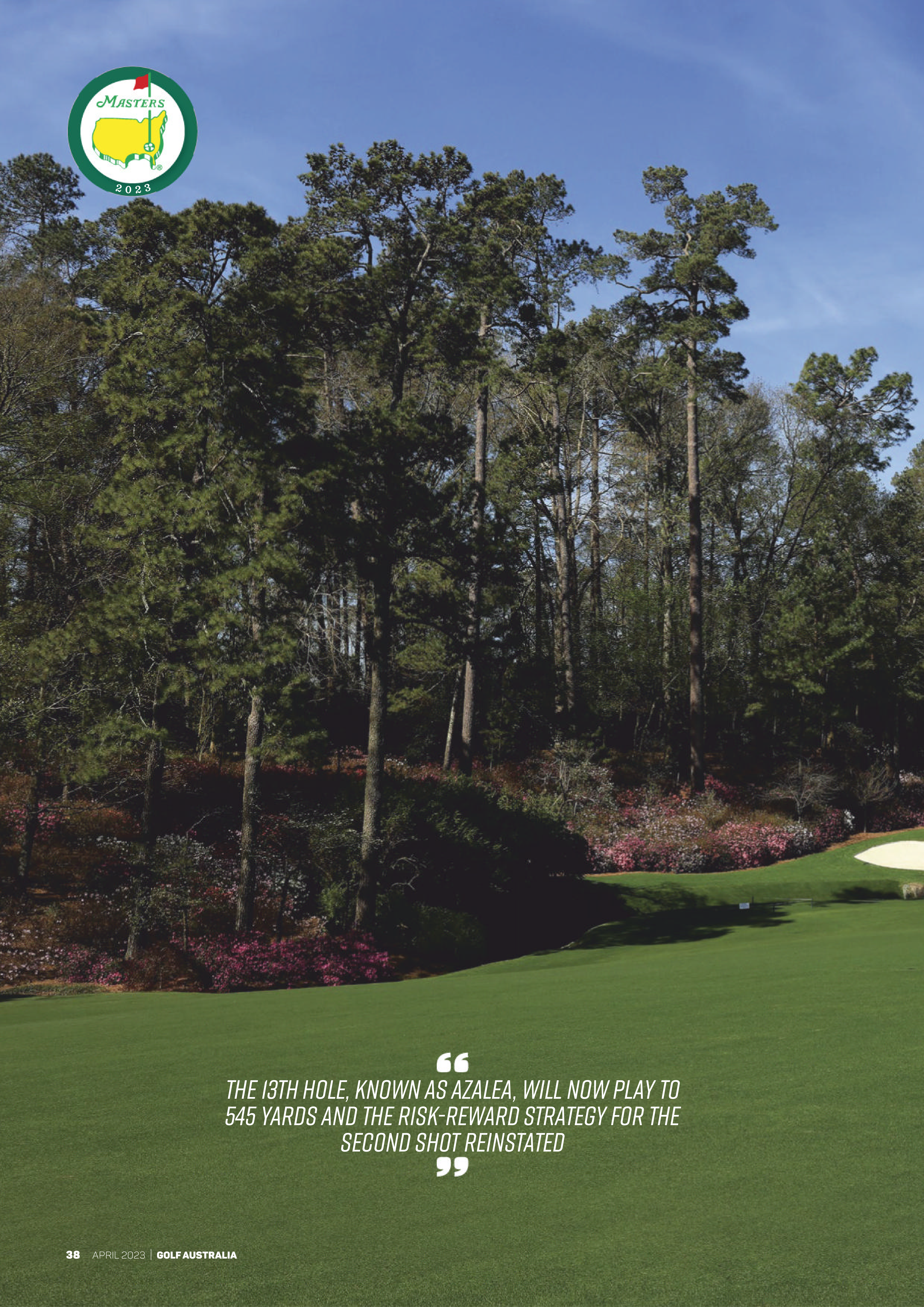
In short, yes.

His return to the PGA Tour at the Genesis Invitational in February was more a training run than a serious bid to win at Riviera, where he has never won. If he could walk that golf course six times in as many days and make the cut, he would be on track for the Masters.

In his first competitive start since The Open last July, he finished T45 after a final round 73. But the real story was he didn't appear to be in pain as he played and his ball-striking, for the most part, was very good. But, as was the case in his three major appearances in 2022, he struggled with his putting.

"My game is fine," Woods said after the final round at Riviera. "Yeah, it is rusty. I made some silly mistakes here and there and I didn't quite pick up the speed of the greens."

It will be a different story at Augusta. ▶



> THE 13TH HOLE, KNOWN AS AZALEA, WILL NOW PLAY TO 545 YARDS AND THE RISK-REWARD STRATEGY FOR THE SECOND SHOT REINSTATED

WILL AUGUSTA PLAY ANY DIFFERENT?

Course changes at Augusta National have become part of the tradition of the Masters each year, and this year will be no different.

Last year, the club revealed new tees on the par-4 11th and par-5 15th which increased the overall length of the fabled layout. The 11th was stretched to 520 yards, while the 15th was lengthened to 550 yards, which resulted in more players not being tempted to go for the waterside green in two blows. In fact, for the first time since 1966, there were no eagles recorded on the 15th at the 2022 Masters.

This year, a new tee has been added at the iconic par-5 13th hole – a move mooted by Augusta National Chairman Fred Ridley last year to restore some of the design integrity to the hole. The decision to lengthen the hole was not taken lightly.

“The 13th hole does not have the same challenges that it has historically,” Ridley said last April. “I can just remember as a young guy watching the Masters, some of the triumphs and tragedies. And while we still have those, the fact that players are hitting middle to short irons into that hole is not really how it was designed.

“My reluctance to date has been that it’s such an iconic hole … So that probably, you know, has been sort of a counter to doing anything. At some point in time, it’s something that we likely will do.”

By the end of 2022 that “something” had been done. Augusta National purchased a parcel of land from the adjacent Augusta Country Club and a new tee, some 35 yards further back up the hill behind the 12th green, was levelled and turfed. The 13th hole, known as Azalea, will now play to 545 yards and the risk-reward strategy for the second shot reinstated.

With Rae’s Creek running in front of the putting surface, historically, those golfers who were bold enough to take on the second shot from an uneven lie in the fairway were often rewarded with an eagle opportunity late in their round. But in recent years, players have been able to cut the corner of the dogleg left with their drive, leaving a mid- to short-iron into the green.

This extra yardage will make the Augusta National layout, at 7, 545 yards (6,899 metres) the longest in the history of the Masters and 640 yards longer than the layout Bernhard Langer won on in 1993. ▶

CAN AN AUSSIE WIN?

Ten years on from Adam Scott's Masters breakthrough and we're eagerly anticipating a second Australian victory.

Just six weeks out from the Masters, only three Australians – Asia-Pacific Amateur Champion, Harrison Crowe, 2013 Masters Champion, Adam Scott, and reigning Open Champion, Cameron Smith – had received invitations.

But Jason Day, Min Woo Lee and Lucas Herbert could play their way into the field by cracking a spot in the top-50 in the Official World Golf Ranking during the week prior to the Masters starting. At the time of writing Day was No.47, Lee No.50 and Herbert No.51.

Smith *(pictured left)* is the obvious pick of the Aussies given his performances at Augusta in recent years. In his past five Masters starts, he has finished in the top-10 four times including a T2 in 2020 and T3 last year.

But the star LIV Golf recruit will be, in racing parlance, lightly raced when he arrives at Augusta having played just nine competitive rounds of golf in 2023, which might see him a little underdone for a genuine shot at the title.

Can Scott conjure the feels and thoughts that saw him triumph a decade ago? Perhaps. But his big concern heading to Augusta is his driving, which has been a strength for all of his career but in 2023 he has struggled to get the ball in the fairway. That could prove problematic at Augusta where simply finding the fairway is only half the job done. To score well, your ball needs to be precisely placed on the best side of the fairway to have an easier approach shot into the complex greens.

If the resurgent Day *(pictured below)* can play his way into the Masters field he could be a genuine threat. He has seemingly overcome his back injury issues of recent years and under new swing coach, Chris Como, he has regained the belief he can compete alongside the world's best players again. ▶

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WHAT ARE THE MASTERS WINNING TRENDS?

AUGUSTA REWARDS FORM

Forget about the Masters producing a surprise winner this year.

The last 13 winners were all ranked inside the world's top-30 heading into the tournament. Since the inception of the Official World Golf Ranking in 1986, more Masters champions have been No.1 in the world (five) than ranked outside the top-40 (two) at the time of their victory.

Focusing on the world's top-25 in the past ten years, Dustin Johnson (2020) and Scottie Scheffler (2022) were ranked No.1 in the world and Hideki Matsuyama was the lowest ranked at No.25 in 2021, the average world ranking of the last 10 Masters winners is 10.9.

EXPERIENCE COUNTS

Only three Masters rookies have won the tournament, with Fuzzy Zoeller in 1979 being the most recent.

What's more, in the past 25 years only two players under the age of 25 have won at Augusta: Tiger Woods in 1997 and Jordan Spieth *(pictured right)* in 2015.

Fun fact: The average age of all Masters winners is 32 years and 223 days, while the average age of first-time victors is 31 years and 10 days.

COURSE KNOWLEDGE

The history of the Masters reveals players usually require a few years playing at Augusta before winning their first green jacket.

In fact, 23 of the past 31 Masters champions had previously made at least four appearances at Augusta National before they won. The most recent exception is defending champion Scottie Scheffler who won in his third Masters start.

The record for the longest wait between Masters debut and victory belongs to Sergio Garcia, who had 19 starts before his 2017 win.

HOMETOWN HEROES

An American has won 60 percent of the last ten Masters tournaments. There have been 86 Masters tournaments played and 63 (73 percent) have been won by an American. ▶

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WILL HARRISON CROWE FLY AT AUGUSTA?

Absolutely. Harrison Crowe has the all-round game to be very competitive at the Masters.

The reigning Asia-Pacific Amateur Champion by-passed some events at home to make a reconnaissance visit to Augusta National in February. While the course would have been set-up nothing like it will be Masters week, it would have been beneficial to get all the excitement and sight-seeing of a first visit out of the way well before the start of the big show.

Can he win it? Probably not. Despite the tournament committee's willingness to host the best male amateurs in the game every year, no amateur has ever won the Masters. The closest any amateur has come to a green jacket was back in 1956 when Ken Venturi blew a lead on Sunday afternoon and ultimately finished runner-up.

Crowe can certainly make the cut and vie for low amateur honours, which is no mean feat in itself given that since 2001 no amateur has made the cut on nine occasions. If he does claim the low amateur medal, he will be only the third Australian to do so behind Jim Ferrier (1940) and Oliver Goss (2014).

"It's pretty surreal knowing I'm playing in the Masters," said Crowe, whose earliest memory of the Masters was watching Adam Scot win in 2013.

"I've never really been a fanatic watching golf on TV a whole lot. But when it comes to the Masters and the majors, I'm pretty glued to it."

Crowe is expected to play practice rounds with Scott, his childhood idol, in the days leading into the opening round.

CAN RORY FINALLY COMPLETE THE CAREER GRAND SLAM?

At the conclusion of last year's Masters, Rory McIlroy declared that it was the happiest he has ever been leaving Augusta National.

McIlroy shot a scintillating final round 64, closing his tournament with a work of art from the greenside bunker at the 18th hole that found the bottom of the cup.

"I don't think I've ever walked away from this tournament as happy as I am today ... I've played a really good round of golf, and it's my best ever finish at Augusta. It's not quite enough, but I'll certainly look back on this day with fond memories," McIlroy said.

That final round was a turning point in McIlroy's season, a missed cut the week before at the Valero Texas Open left him asking questions. McIlroy was struggling with his consistency and distance control in the wind, sighting the ball he had been playing being the catalyst for his struggles.

His next stop was the TaylorMade tour van to tell them he was done with the ball, the 2022 TP5. They suggested that he start to use the 2019 TP5x that Scotsman Robert MacIntyre had been using. The then 32-year-old deciding to trial the ball with immediate positive results and a place in his bag at Augusta.

The change helped McIlroy find some consistency, especially with his wedges and eventually led McIlroy back to World No.1, put him in contention at every major of the season, helped his successful bid for a third FedExCup and delivered his best result at The Masters.

McIlroy's relationship with Augusta National is a complicated one, with the Northern Irishman's seven top-10s coming without genuinely contending on a Sunday afternoon, despite the Alister MacKenzie course seemingly being a perfect fit for his game.

Rory's most famous moment from his 14 trips down Magnolia Lane came in 2011, before he had captured a major title, when having led or co-led for a majority of the tournament. Arriving at the 10th tee on Sunday with a one-shot lead, McIlroy saw the green jacket slip off his shoulders with a triple-bogey on 10, bogey at 11 and double-bogey at the 12th.

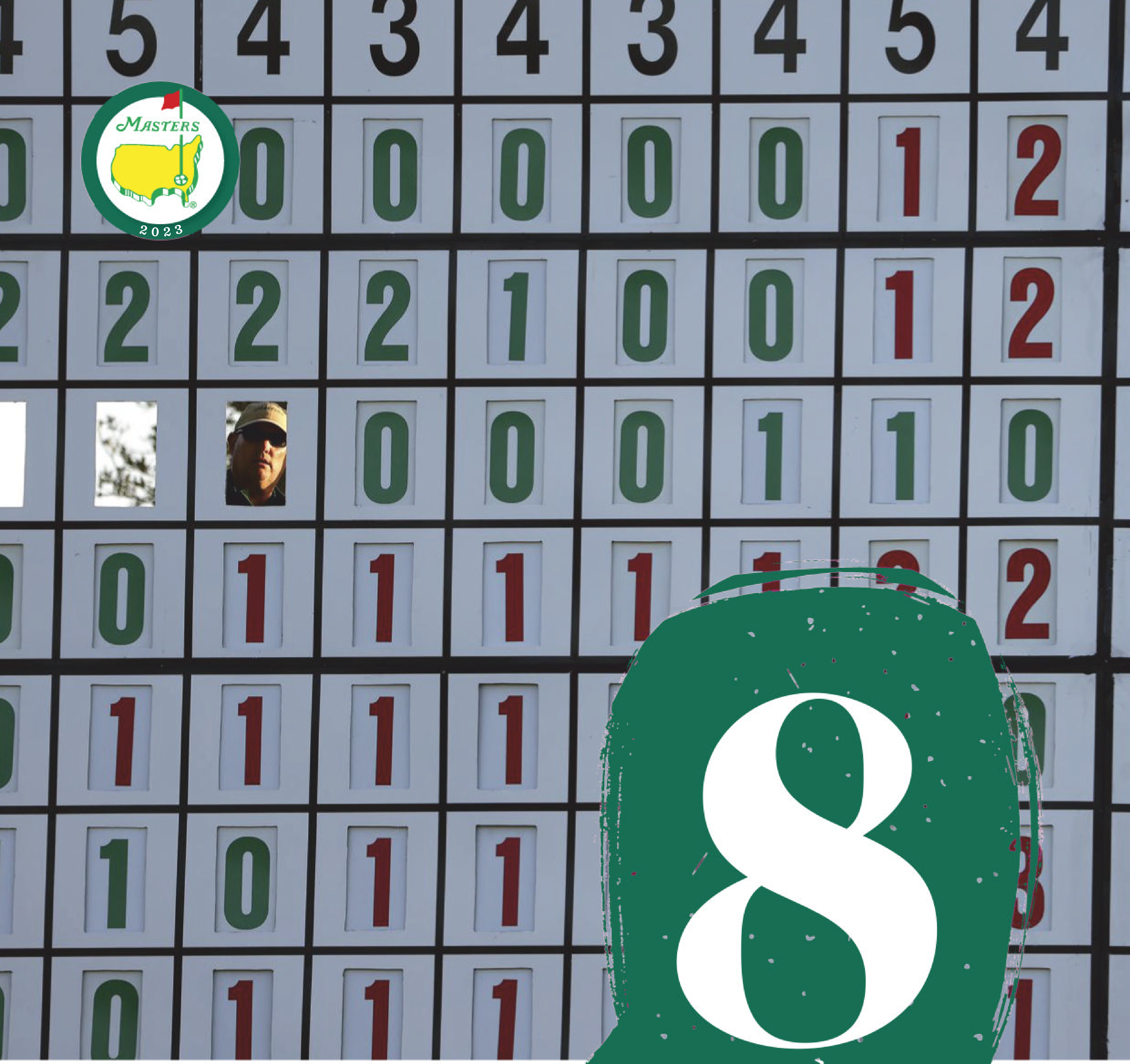
It was a heartbreaking finish for McIlroy, who went on to sign for 80 and plummet down the leaderboard as South Africa's Charl Schwartzel claimed his first and only major.

Despite the disappointment, McIlroy believes the capitulation shaped his career and his eight-shot U.S Open win at Congressional just months later.

"Losing the Masters sets up everything to follow; it changed me ... It will always stand me in good stead. I needed to learn how to play at the end of a major championship," he said at the time.

Since winning The Open in 2014, when McIlroy also won the PGA Championship for his most recent major win, the World No.3 has had eight attempts to join Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods in winning each of the four men's majors. Arguably in career best form, a rejuvenated McIlroy believes his game is in no better place to join the elite career grand slam club than in 2023.

"I said at the end of last year I feel as complete a player as I ever have. If you look at my statistical categories there's no real glaring weaknesses there and I worked really hard on that to try to become a more well-rounded player." ▶



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WHO ARE THE GENUINE CONTENDERS?

GREENS IN REGULATION
Distance is, of course, a big plus at Augusta but precision iron play separates the contenders from the pretenders, with the stats supporting that argument.

In five of the past eight Masters, the champion has ranked in the top-five for strokes gained approach. Going back even further, 17 of the past 23 winners have ranked inside the top-six for greens hit in regulation.

SCRAMBLING
Augusta's dramatic sloping greens and run-off areas create small landing spots that can be difficult to hit. That's why serious contenders need a deft short game. Fourteen of the past 16 winners have ranked in the top-10 in 'scrambling' (getting up and down from off the green) during the four rounds.

THREE-PUTT AVOIDANCE
Any player can climb the Masters leaderboard by avoiding three-putts.

Sounds simple but consider this. The PGA Tour average for three putts at regular Tour stops is three percent. At Augusta National that percentage surges to almost six percent.

When Dustin Johnson and Danny Willett won, they only had a single three-putt across the four rounds. Last year's champion, Scottie Scheffler, had three three-putts in 72 holes, while no player who made the cut in 2022 escaped without at least one three-putt.

PAR-5 SCORING
Making birdies, or eagles, on the 2nd, 8th, 13th and 15th holes is vitally important in pursuit of victory at Augusta.

These long holes are usually ranked among the easiest for scoring, so birdies are essential to keep up with the field.

The past five Masters winners – Scottie Scheffler, Hideki Matsuyama, Dustin Johnson, Tiger Woods and Patrick Reed – played the par-5s in a combined 52-under-par.

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WHO ARE THE SO-CALLED EXPERTS TIPPING?

ADAM SCOTT
I backed Adam Scott when he won the 2013 Masters and for old times' sake, I'll be doing it again this year. I watched mesmerised at him hitting balls when he was home at the end of last year and it will take some convincing that he's not among the best ball-strikers on Tour.

That said, he needs to address issues with his driver and if he can do that, he will be in the mix come Sunday afternoon. – ***Brendan James.***

RORY MCILROY
Like Greg Norman, Ernie Els and Tom Weiskopf in decades past I can't help but feel — deep down — that Rory McIlroy might just be the Augusta 'Nearly Man' of his generation. But it is for that very reason (and because I'd love to be wrong) that he's my pick to win and complete the career Grand Slam.

When McIlroy's good he's always been better than everyone else but these days even when he's less than his best he's good enough. – ***Rod Morri.***

RORY MCILROY
The light on LIV Golf schedule suggests the players from the newest Tour in golf will have the chance to get in some extra work at Augusta National, but there is such a thing as overpreparing for a specific event and I think that will be the case this year for Greg's men.

So, it is to the PGA Tour crew for me, and while Jon Rahm will be there or thereabouts during the week, 2023 is the year Rory McIlroy finally gets the Augusta National tailor to take his measurements for a green jacket. – ***Jimmy Emanuel.***

JON RAHM
Back-to-back wins are unlikely at Augusta so Scottie Scheffler is out. Inconsistent putters can win at Augusta but it's not likely so Adam Scott, Rory McIlroy, Justin Thomas, Collin Morikawa and Will Zalatoris are out. Augusta favours longer hitters so Patrick Cantlay, Xander Schauffele and Jordan Spieth are out. Cam Smith and DJ will have too much to prove representing LIV so they're out. I have therefore statistically proven that Jon Rahm will win the 2023 Masters. – ***Adrian Logue.***

CAM SMITH
I normally admit to bias in such matters, but I'm firmly of the belief that the Penguin Sunday maroon will look excellent framed by the green jacket. Cam Smith, now the Open champion with the absolute belief he can get things done on major Sunday afternoons, returns to a place that suits him just perfectly.

He has four top-10s in five starts here including a fifth, a third and a second that will leave with a Bob Beamon-style record that will last generations – imagine shooting four rounds in the 60s at Augusta National and not winning the Masters? Suffice to say, this is a putter's paradise and a place where your wedge will be required to extricate you from impending calamity more than once. Enter the mighty mullet – he won't give a XXXX gold about LIV commentary during the week and will be Australia's second Masters champ. – ***Mark Hayes.***

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TEN YEARS ON, WE REMEMBER SCOTTY'S HISTORY MAKER

It was the moment Australian golf changed forever.

In rain and near darkness Adam Scott found the bottom of the cup at the par-4 10th for a birdie three to claim the sudden death play-off and more importantly The Masters Tournament and Australia's first-ever green jacket.

Scott's iconic primal scream of "C'mon Aussie" when his birdie dropped at the 72nd hole with Marc Leishman in the background and Ian Baker-Finch's "From Down Under to on top of the world" in the commentary box echoed the importance of the moment for Aussies everywhere.

For years, Augusta National had taunted our best players who did their valiant best, yet at every opportunity came up short of golf's most famous article of clothing.

There was Jim Ferrier, an early pioneer for Australians in America. Craig Parry and the taunts of the crowd in 1992. Geoff Ogilvy went close. So too did Scott and Jason Day two years earlier.

But it was Greg Norman, Scott's idol, who came so agonisingly close again and again at The Masters.

All that heartbreak was, at least temporarily, forgotten on April 14, 2013 when Scott lifted his arms and long putter into the air in a mix of joy and relief.

The moment remembered as a "Where were you when" moment by Australian golfers and golf fans, including those who shared their memories over the following pages. ▶

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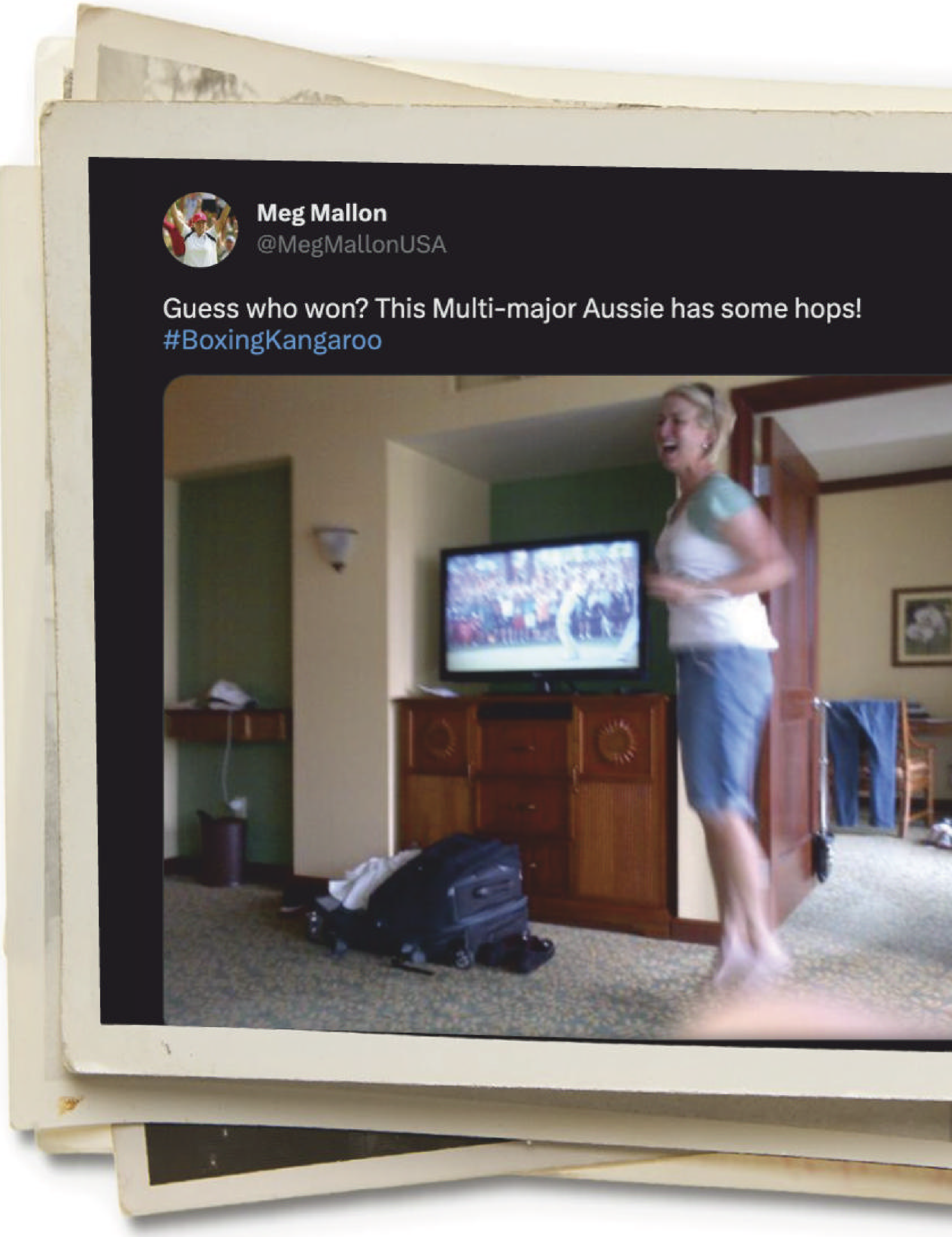

Meg Mallon
@MegMallonUSA

Guess who won? This Multi-major Aussie has some hops! #BoxingKangaroo

KARRIE WEBB – *Seven-time major champion*

We were in Hawaii before the LPGA event there (Lotte Championship). We got in early because it was Meg Mallon's 50th birthday and we wanted to celebrate that but also because it was The Masters weekend.

In Hawaii the coverage starts at like 9am because of the time difference, so it was a bit like being back home in Australia.

I remember it had been a good week for us because Adam was up there, but so was Jason Day and Marc Leishman so as an Aussie, it was super exciting. But I was cautious, too.

I could still remember a couple of years before when Charl Schwartzel won and three of our guys were up there on the back nine and I was like "There's no way we're not going to win today" and we all know what happened then. So I wasn't saying anything this time around!

When Adam holed that putt in regulation ahead of Cabrera, I really thought he'd done it. Then Cabrera hit that amazing shot right after to tie it up and go into a play-off and I was so nervous. It actually reminded me of a couple of times when I was a kid watching back home in Australia and there would be a play-off and my mum would write me a note for being late to school so I could watch it.

After they both parred the first play-off hole the commentators said they wouldn't be able to play more than one more hole and I was so pumped I couldn't sit down, I was just pacing around.

Then when Adam's putt went in on the 10th ... it was just crazy. I don't remember it specifically, but I know I was jumping up and down and just going crazy.

I would have been the same if any Aussie had won but Adam is just such a good guy and such a great ambassador for Australia and for golf.

It was so good to see him win and the way he did it weas pretty awesome. That celebration in regulation when he screamed out "C'mon Aussie" ... I think that if you weren't a fan of him before that, you were definitely a fan after.

I think what made it even more special was how Adam celebrated with everyone at the end of the year, coming back and taking the green jacket everywhere with him. He really got the importance of it, not just for himself but for everyone else, too.

Any Aussie that has a chance to win the Masters knows they are carrying a huge burden because of what's happened there over the years but now because of Adam there's a bit less pressure.

One of Australia's great sporting moments I think.

JASON DAY – *2015 PGA Championship winner and 2013 Masters contender.*

I think about it every now and then like when I get asked a question about it!

You know, every now and then it feels like, dang, man, I was close, I could have been the first guy. Obviously I couldn't see a more fitting person than Adam Scott. He was my favourite player growing up.

I did stay –I didn't obviously walk, but I sat in the clubhouse to watch the play-off and that was some of the most fascinating golf with how quick they played but how efficient they played. It's amazing to me that it's been 10 years already.

Does it spur me on to win Augusta? Yeah, every single – this is the only major that like growing up that I wanted to win was Augusta National. So every single time I get the chance to compete in it, I'm doing everything I possibly can to prepare and try and win that event myself.

DAVID MICHELUZZI – *PGA Tour of Australasia Order of Merit leader*

I was playing the 2013 junior interstate series in Perth at Bunbury Golf Club.

We were on the range before playing and no one wanted to go out and play from any of the states, we all just wanted to watch the finish.

I was playing number 4, I think Blake Collyer was caddying for me (Collyer was actually caddying in a later group), and we were on the, I think the 10th, a downhill par-3, it was our first hole and there are houses around the course. ▶

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> … WHEN SCOTT'S BALL TUMBLED INTO THE CUP FOR HIS CLOSING BIRDIE. THE INCREDIBLE ROAR SHOOK THE GROUND. STRANGERS HUGGED. WE WERE ALL WET AND A LITTLE BIT COLD BUT WE COULDN'T CARE LESS.
>
> **– BRENDAN JAMES**

We heard this massive roar, and we knew exactly what it was, and that was a good day, a good day for I think everyone in Australia, even if they don't follow golf, pretty cool.

After I finished playing I went in and watched it back. I think I have watched it about 100 times, it's pretty cool, like just no one's ever won the Masters from Australia, and yeah, that was just an accomplishment that I don't think any Aussie's think they could do especially after the past experiences.

Ten years, far out that's a long time now, I feel a bit old!

BRAITH ANASTA – ***Former Australian rugby league representative***

I had just gone to the Wests Tigers to play late in my career.

I had never had a day off from training in my entire career and I was sitting at home and I said, f*** that, I'm going in late.

I was at home in Clovelly and I didn't go to training that day, so I mean, I know exactly where I was, I was at home, I remember it clear as, I remember, I'm like "Should I go to training?", but then I'm going to miss it, because I was driving to Concord, which from my area is a fair whack, and I'm gonna miss the back nine.

I thought to myself I've just got to take the hit here and not go to training, and I had never had a day off, I was the most punctual, disciplined, and I'm just not missing this, and I stayed home and watched it.

I mean its not an amazing story that would be that different to a lot of people not going to work, but I remember it clearly, because it was the start of the year, I was in the team, it was my first real day off in my whole time playing footy not showing up to training.

JIMMY EMANUEL – ***Golf Australia Magazine Deputy and Digital Editor***

Like every other Masters year, and especially those with an Aussie in contention, I was up early on the Monday morning at home to watch.

At the time I was working at a driving range and pro shop that opened early, but I called around and found someone else to cover the early shift I was allocated because I wasn't missing a minute of the action on the 30 minute drive. Or risk having some customer walk in at the crucial moment.

So I perched on the couch and obsessively kept making cups of tea and coffee to get rid of the nervous energy, while messaging with every person golfer or not who was doing the same, and some on their way to work asking for updates.

When Adam was over the putt on the 18th hole in regulation I was shaking. I'd never experienced something like that when just watching a sporting event, and haven't since.

When Cabrera would hit a good shot, that regular sense of Augusta dread would hit ▶

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MASTERS
2023

me like a brick wall, feeling it was about to happen again.

Then, the putt on the 10th snaked its way into the hole and suddenly there were tears. At the time, I had never met Adam. Yet I was overcome with emotion.

My first memory of watching golf on TV was the Shark's collapse in 1996. For some reason I got to leave for school a little late that day and watch it unfold and it stuck with me forever and Scott in 2013 felt like a full circle moment.

BRENDAN JAMES – *Golf Australia Magazine Editor*

The Masters of 2013 began as it does every year … full of anticipation.

Would this be the year an Aussie finally slipped into the coveted green jacket? Could I be so lucky that my first trip to the Masters would be the ONE?

I got my first glimpses of Augusta National late on the Sunday afternoon leading into Masters week. I set out walking the back nine shortly after 5pm and there was not a soul to be seen among the shadows cast across the rolling emerald fairways. I stood behind the 10th green and looked back up the fairway, marvelling at the incredible drop from tee-to-green you just can't imagine when watching the Masters on TV.

Fast forward seven days, almost to the hour, and a sea of humanity braving the rain would line this hole in near darkness to witness Adam Scott make history as the first Australian to win the Masters.

I'll never forget that rainy Georgia afternoon. For most of the back nine that Sunday, it seemed like Jason Day would be the one as he led by as many as three strokes. But bogeys at 16 and 17 cost him his shot.

In contrast, Scott grabbed his chance, making birdies at the 13th and 15th holes before setting the clubhouse lead at nine-under when he rolled in his 25-foot birdie putt across the 18th green, which was completely surrounded by a vocal and appreciative crowd.

I was 10, maybe 11, rows of people back from the gallery rope left of the green when Scott's ball tumbled into the cup for his closing birdie. The incredible roar shook the ground. Strangers hugged. We were all wet and a little bit cold but we couldn't care less. This was magnificent.

Moments later, Angel Cabrera stuffed his approach in close and made a birdie of his own to force a play-off.

Scott and the Argentinian scrambled for pars on 18 after Cabrera almost broke a nation's heart – like Larry Mize had done in 1987 against Greg Norman – when his chip short from short of the green came agonisingly close to dropping in the hole.

What the TV coverage didn't show was just how dark it was during the play-off. You could barely see the 10th green from the top of the hill. Nevertheless, the pair pressed on … down the steep 10th fairway, flashing thumbs up at each other as they trekked towards the green.

Cabrera missed with his birdie try and then it was left to Scott to grab his chance. There was an incredible silence, almost like nobody was there at all, as Scott stood over his 15-footer for the win. The rest, as they say, is history.

For the small contingent of Australian journalists at Augusta the lifelong memory was not going to stop there. Scott invited us back to his rented Augusta house for a celebration. When we arrived, the 2013 Masters Champion opened the front door wearing his green jacket and a pair of boardshorts. The consummate host asked if we had eaten and would we like a sandwich, before allowing us the indulgence of a photo with him.

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AUSTRALIA'S GREATEST 18

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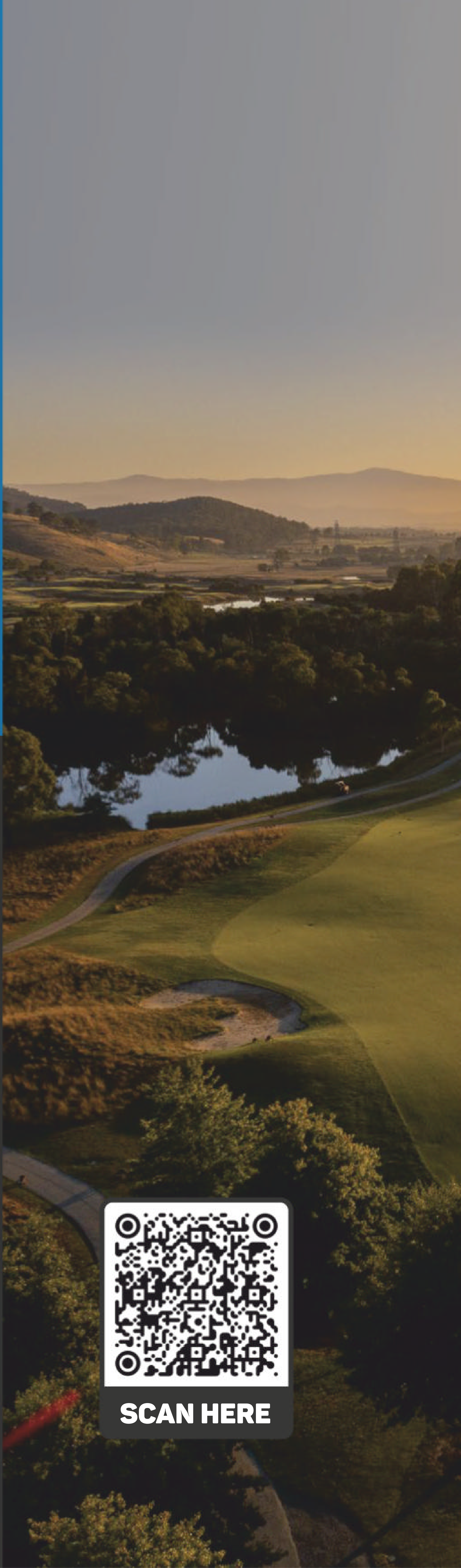

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Golf Australia magazine is, with your help, embarking on a search for the best 18 holes in the nation. And, by assisting us, you will go into the draw to win new custom-fitted Titleist equipment worth $5,000.

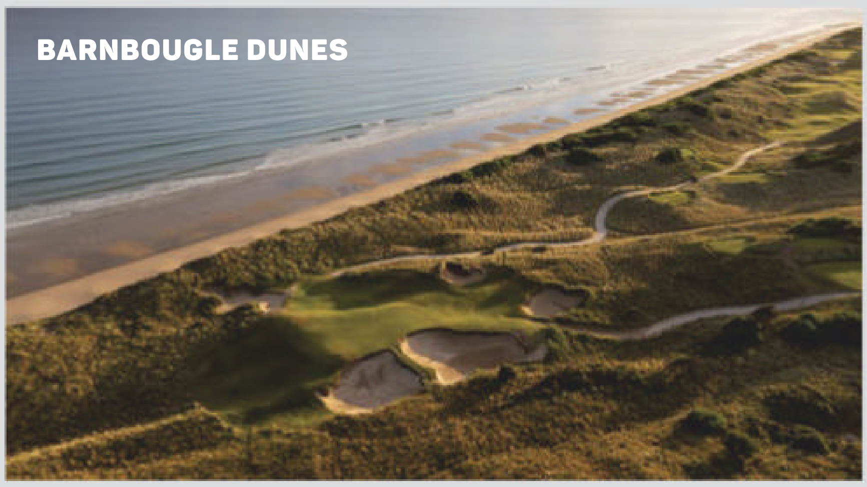
With so many great golf holes spread across the Australian golfing landscape, we thought it was time to acknowledge the best of the best.

So, until May 17, you will have the chance to nominate the best holes in the country.

We want you to nominate the best 1st hole, the best 2nd hole, best 3rd hole and so on. We will then count all the votes to ultimately establish Australia's Greatest 18, which will be published in a special feature in our July 2023 edition.

Across the following pages, you will find a collection of holes – as suggested by some of our Top-100 Courses ranking judges – that may refresh your memory prior to submitting your nominations. These are just suggestions and if you want to nominate a hole we haven't suggested, please do ... we want to hear about it. This month, we have suggestions for holes 7 to 12. ▶

7TH HOLE


BARNBOUGLE DUNES

THE NATIONAL GC (Old Course)
Cape Schanck, Victoria

BARNBOUGLE DUNES
Bridport, Tasmania

NEW SOUTH WALES GC
La Perouse, NSW

VICTORIA GC
Cheltenham, Victoria

NEWCASTLE GC
Stockton, NSW

THE DUNES GL
Rye, Victoria

THIRTEENTH BEACH (Beach Course)
Barwon Heads, Victoria

ROYAL HOBART GC
Seven Mile Beach, Tasmania

PENINSULA KINGSWOOD CGC (North Course)
Frankston, Victoria

PENINSULA KINGSWOOD CGC (South Course)
Frankston, Victoria

MT OSMOND GC
Mt Osmond, South Australia

ROYAL MELBOURNE GC (West Course)
Black Rock, Victoria

JOONDALUP RESORT (Dune nine)
Connolly, Western Australia

GLENELG GC
Novar Gardens, South Australia

PORTSEA GC
Portsea, Victoria

ROYAL MELBOURNE WEST COURSE

8TH HOLE

TASMAN GC
Port Arthur, Tasmania

KALGOORLIE GC
Kalgoorlie, Western Australia

ALICE SPRINGS GC
Alice Springs, Northern Territory

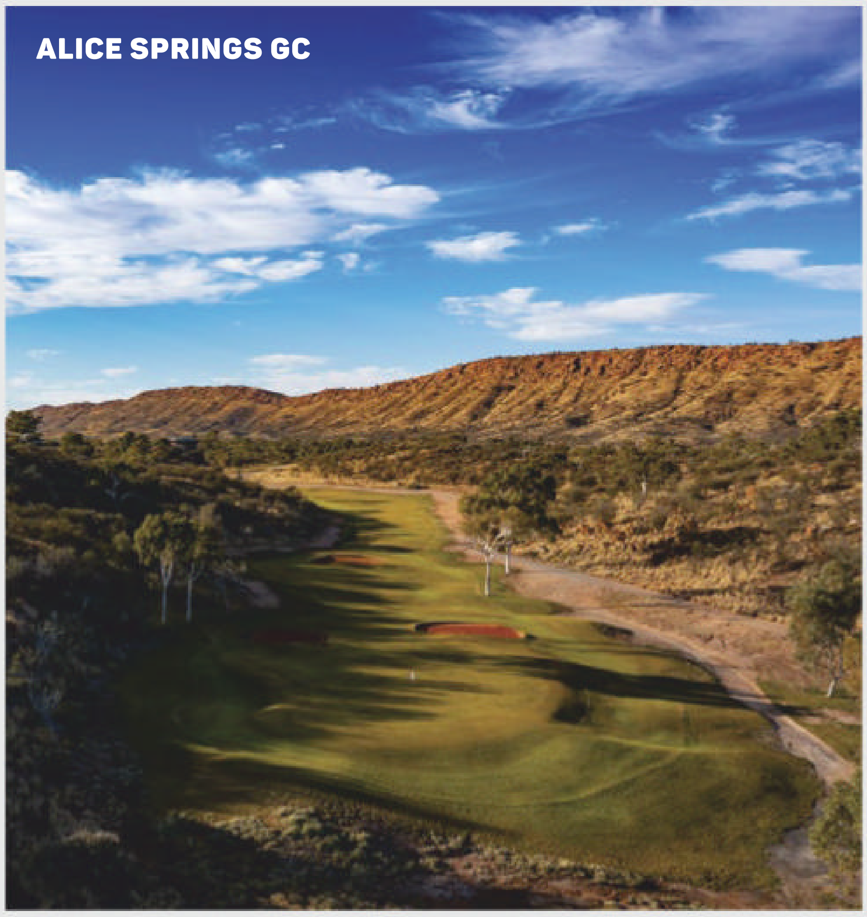
TWIN WATERS GC
Twin Waters, Queensland

BARNBOUGLE LOST FARM
Bridport, Tasmania

THE NATIONAL GC (Long Island Course)
Frankston, Victoria

THE AUSTRALIAN GC
Kensington, NSW

LAKE KARRINYUP CC
Karrinyup, Western Australia


ALICE SPRINGS GC

PENINSULA KINGSWOOD CGC (South Course)
Frankston, Victoria

PENINSULA KINGSWOOD CGC (North Course)
Frankston, Victoria

MT GAMBIER GC
Mt Gambier, South Australia

KOOYONGA GC
May Terrace, South Australia

ROYAL QUEENSLAND GC
Eagle Farm, Queensland

MAGENTA SHORES G&CC
Magenta, NSW

BONNIE DOON GC
Pagewood, NSW

9TH HOLE

PALMER COOLUM RESORT

PALMER COOLUM RESORT
Yaroomba, Queensland

YARRA YARRA GC
Bentleigh East, Victoria

METROPOLITAN GC
Oakleigh South, Victoria

COMMONWEALTH GC
South Oakleigh, Victoria

KINGSTON HEATH
Cheltenham, Victoria

THE HERITAGE G&CC (St. Johns Course)
Chirnside Park, Victoria

VICTORIA GC
Cheltenham, Victoria

JOONDALUP RESORT (Dune nine)
Connolly, Western Australia

JOONDALUP RESORT (Lake nine)
Connolly, Western Australia

BARWON HEADS
Barwon Heads, Victoria

TERREY HILLS G&CC
Terrey Hills, NSW

MEADOW SPRINGS G&CC
Meadow Springs, Western Australia

EASTERN GC (South Course)
Yering, Victoria

THE LAKES GC
Eastlakes, NSW

BARNBOUGLE LOST FARM
Bridport, Tasmania

BARNBOUGLE LOST FARM

10TH HOLE

KINGSTON HEATH
Cheltenham, Victoria

ROYAL MELBOURNE GC (West Course)
Black Rock, Victoria

BONVILLE GOLF RESORT
Bonville, NSW

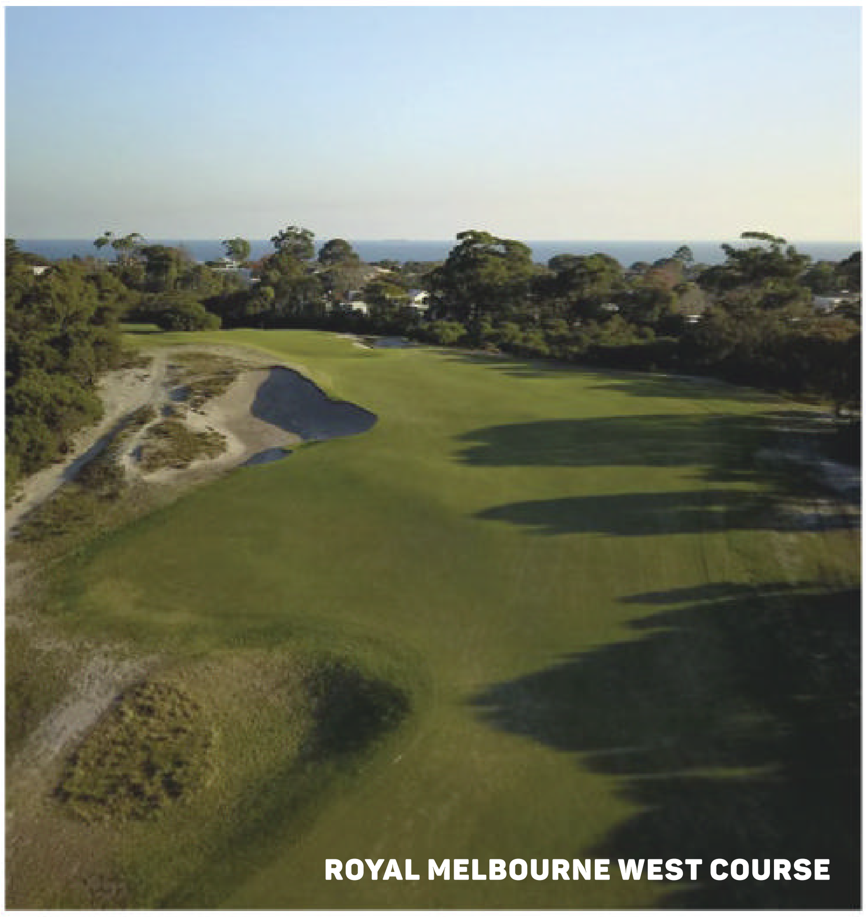
NEWCASTLE GC
Stockton, NSW

MT COMPASS
Mt Compass, South Australia

OCEAN DUNES
King Island, Tasmania

SANCTUARY COVE CC (Pines Course)
Sanctuary Cove, Queensland

METROPOLITAN GC
Oakleigh South, Victoria



THE NATIONAL GC (Moonah Course)
Cape Schanck, Victoria

THE LAKES GC
Eastlakes, NSW

ROYAL MELBOURNE GC (East Course)
Black Rock, Victoria

CAPE WICKHAM LINKS
King Island, Tasmania

GLENELG GC
Novar Gardens, South Australia

PORTSEA GC
Portsea, Victoria

SPRING VALLEY GC
Clayton South, Victoria ▶

PHOTOS: BRENDAN JAMES X 6

11TH HOLE

VICTORIA GC

VICTORIA GC
Cheltenham, Victoria

YARRA YARRA GC
Bentleigh East, Victoria

THE NATIONAL GC (Moonah Course)
Cape Schanck, Victoria

MOONAH LINKS (Legends Course)
Fingal, Victoria

THIRTEENTH BEACH (Beach Course)
Barwon Heads, Victoria

ROYAL ADELAIDE GC
Seaton, South Australia

COMMONWEALTH GC
South Oakleigh, Victoria

OCEAN DUNES
King Island, Tasmania

THE VINES RESORT & CC
The Vines, Western Australia

THE LAKES GC
Eastlakes, NSW

NEW SOUTH WALES GC
La Perouse, NSW

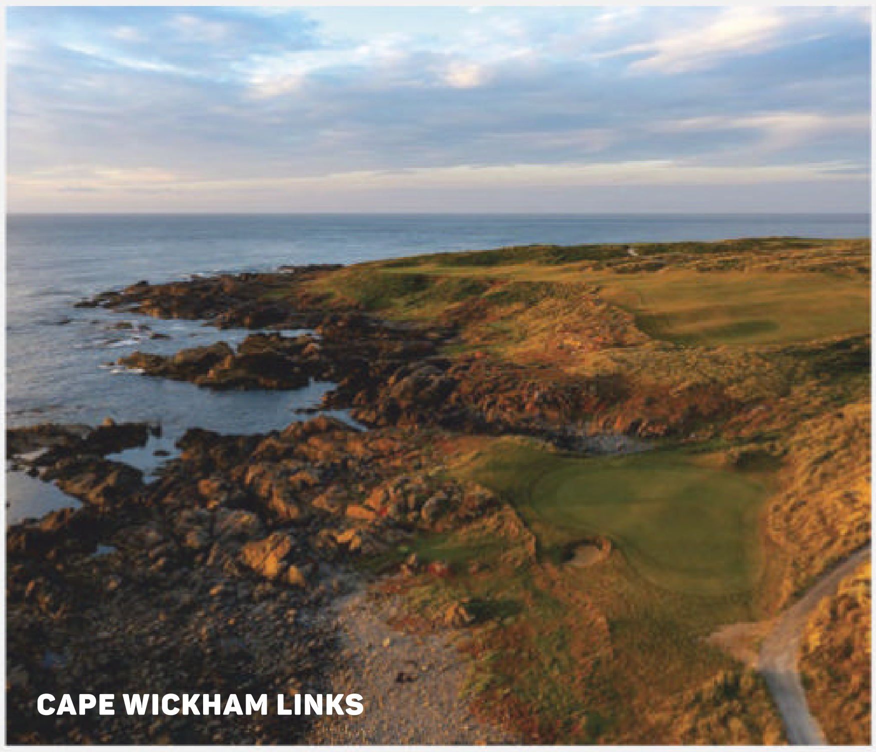
TASMANIA GC
Barilla Bay, Tasmania

CAPE WICKHAM LINKS
King Island, Tasmania

GLENELG GC
Novar Gardens, South Australia

THE GRANGE GC (West Course)
Grange, South Australia

CYPRESS LAKES G&CC
Pokolbin, NSW


CAPE WICKHAM LINKS

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12TH HOLE

MAROOCHY RIVER GC

THE CUT GC
Port Bouvard, Western Australia

VICTORIA GC
Cheltenham, Victoria

ST. MICHAEL'S GC
Little Bay, NSW

MAROOCHY RIVER GC
Bli Bli, Queensland

THE DUNES GL
Rye, Victoria

THIRTEENTH BEACH (Beach Course)
Barwon Heads, Victoria

ROYAL MELBOURNE GC (West Course)
Black Rock, Victoria

PORT FAIRY GL
Port Fairy, Victoria

THE NATIONAL GC (Gunnamatta Course)
Cape Schanck, Victoria

PENINSULA KINGSWOOD CGC (North Course)
Frankston, Victoria

PENINSULA KINGSWOOD CGC (South Course)
Frankston, Victoria

CAPE WICKHAM LINKS
King Island, Tasmania

MURRAY DOWNS G&CC
Murray Downs, NSW

KOOYONGA GC
May Terrace, South Australia

CURLEWIS GC
Curlewis, Victoria

LONSDALE LINKS
Point Lonsdale, Victoria

LONSDALE LINKS

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LIV GOLF ADELAIDE

IT'S GOLF ... BUT NOT AS YOU KNOW IT

The City of Churches will throw out the welcome mat to the LIV Golf series from April 21 to 23, when the rebel league makes its Australian debut at Adelaide's The Grange Golf Club. Here's what golf fans can expect.

WORDS **MATT CLEARY** PHOTOGRAPHY **GETTY IMAGES**

GOLF
LIV GOLF
1
2
3

DEPRIVED OF BIG TIME GOLF, ADELAIDE WILL LAP UP THE PARTY ATMOSPHERE AND GOLF.

Sam Snead, according to the great American novelist John Updike, would "swagger around the range like the sheriff of golf county". In high pants and pork pie hat, Snead was instantly recognisable: a man big of body and deed and carriage. He also had a golf game from the gods. And the people came from everywhere to see him.

Dustin Johnson has a similarly distinctive gait, though it's more the lope of a huge jungle cat. Like Snead, Johnson is like one-and-a-half humans. He's a defender in ice hockey, a No.8 for the All Blacks, Buddy Franklin – an incongruously large yet classically-proportioned human man.

And Johnson, like our Buddy and ol' Slammin Sam, has pulling power. Johnson is a star. Because Johnson, too, has a golf game from the gods.

It's why LIV Golf's Saudi-backed money-printing division went so hard after him, and after Brooks Koepka, Bryson DeChambeau and our own mega-star, the mulleted beer-drinking everyman Cameron Smith. Because star power sells.

And it is these people, among others, who will be LIV Golf's major salesmen when the year-old league brings its roadshow to Adelaide's The Grange Golf Club from April 21 to 23.

One thing is clear: Australians are curious. We'll hold our water on the quality of the tournament. But we are hungry for world class golf, and LIV Golf will trot out the best collection of players to play here since the 2019 President's Cup.

What's LIV Golf like?

I went to tournaments in Thailand and Saudi Arabia in October and one answer is colourful. There are banners and branding everywhere, a melange of aquamarine, turquoise and teal. It's like a coral reef spawned those T-shirts from the '90s.

There's that disco font, a nod to Studio 54. There are big banners with the naff team names, and we'll talk more of them. There is little to no advertising. Sponsors weren't really into LIV Golf's YouTube-broadcast 'beta year'. Didn't really have to be – Saudi Arabia makes a billion a day ... they've thrown ashtray change at a start-up.

The shotgun starts are interesting.

The one at Stonehill – north of Bangkok, owned by Thailand's second-richest man, an energy baron, nice work if you can get it – was heralded by traditional drummers at each tee belting into mighty bongos with Kendo sticks.

The Saudi tournament kicked off with traditional dancing men and quite startling explosions of aquamarine smoke. What they'll do in Adelaide remains to be seen – Cold Chisel's *Khe Sanh* performed with a didgeridoo backing?

The scoreboards are good and plentiful; you'll work out who's where fairly easily. There's plenty of signage. Like any tournament, you can hang in one spot, follow a group or rove about doing your best.

Is it "Golf, but louder?"

As Marge Simpson said, "Hhhhmmm. Maybe." It appeared 'loud American' in Boston

CONCERTS ARE THE NORM AFTER THE CLUBS HAVE BEEN RACKED FOR THE DAY.

LIV GOLF CEO GREG NORMAN THROWS FREE BEERS TO THE CROWDS AT A LIV EVENT IN 2022.

and Miami and Trump's course at Bedminster, which looked more like a campaign rally for MAGA assholes, pissed-up frat boys stroking The Donald's ego … something like it.

The Aussie event, of course, won't be like that. But there will be a party, because LIV Golf is pitching itself to the youth. As the former Chief Operating Officer of LIV Golf, Atul Khosla, told me: "The way we've tried to look at it, first and foremost, is from the lens of the fan. You ask a question, 'Why are we here? What are we trying to achieve?'

"I don't think we woke up saying let's have a disruptive rebel league, that's not what the 'why' was. The why is that there's a fan base that's ageing, it's 65-plus, male, white, caucasian, ageing year after year.

"Well, that's not where the future of golf needs to be. How do we engage a 40-year-old, a 30-year-old, a 20-year-old? What needs to happen with the product to engage that audience?"

The answer may lie at Royal Randwick and Flemington. LIV Golf wants to court the race-track party people; the 20- and 30-somethings who'll go to a top-class sports event without necessarily knowing much about it. The kids don't care – nor do they even need to care – about the form of Chris Waller's three-year-old gelding any more than they need to know Brooks Koepka's won four major titles. They just want to watch something cool, have a drink and get jiggy.

The team thing is interesting. The names may be naff – Majesticks? What? – and Smith has changed Punch GC to Ripper GC (as in you bloody Ripper, not Jack The …). Perhaps he would have been better advised to involve a canetoad or a boxing kangaroo, or a coat of arms with both animals fighting.

At the time of writing we didn't know the makeup of 'Team Australia'. We did know Smith will captain Marc Leishman and Matt Jones, while Wade Ormsby was likely. (Jed Morgan replaced Ormsby in 2023.)

Will Australians take to it?

For mine there'll be arched eyebrows early: entertain us and we'll see. But I can see people, even just taking the piss, getting around in Boxing Canetoad GC merchandise.

And so, all this 'colour' – the actual colours and the cast of characters – is coming to dear old Radelaide where Norman and the greater LIV Golf machine will sell us LIV Golf – parties, music, merchandise and world class, famous golfers.

The play is the major selling point. In Bangkok and King Abdullah Economic City, as it was at Royal Melbourne, you marvelled at the precision and power of the gods. I saw Johnson, DeChambeau and Koepka lash the ball long and shape it in hot winds. Smith hit a shot from a fairway bunker that landed with butterfly's feet, three feet. You couldn't hit the shot in your dreams.

Yet the Thais weren't hooting nor hollering – because they just don't. Plus, it was really, really stinking hot. Then Saudi Arabia said: hold my non-alcoholic beer.

The LIV Golf Invitational Jeddah was held 90km north of Jeddah in a partially-built future mega-city called King Abdullah ▶

Team Championship
MIAMI
18

CAM SMITH AND DUSTIN JOHNSON WILL BE THE TWO BIGGEST NAMES COMPETING IN ADELAIDE.

Economic City, where mighty palm-lined boulevards and four-lane highways weave through vacant desert. There are three or four five-star hotels, a massive marina mooring the odd Russian party boat and a championship golf course. And that's about it. Empty estates, empty mansions. Dainty lamp posts line empty streets in empty suburbs. It's a weird ghost city that money forget – or at least went on holiday from.

And it was stupid hot. Even the wind off the Red Sea was hot. The shotgun start kicked off proceedings at midday, which wasn't the hottest part of the day because that came nine holes later. And thus, there were very few if any spectators venturing out onto the golf course.

Indeed, on the Saturday, I walked nine holes (with a press pass, they didn't a give stuff where you walked) with Johnson, Smith and the poor man's Koepka, Chase, who looked like an amateur playing golf in shorts with two buck males. And that was the party: caddies, scorer, TV guy, me, two of the greatest golfers in the world.

It was quite weird, world class golf played in a desert echo chamber.

But it was top class golf. The top Americans are ridiculously good. Perhaps only golf nerds could point out Cameron Tringale in the street. But he is ridiculously good. So is Jason Kokrak. So is Harold Varner III. Patrick Reed is an odd bird with a sketchy past. But the mad bastard can play, and you'll get along to see the green-jacket winner for the same reasons they did in Bangkok, if not King Abdullah Economic City.

Of the internationals, Joaquin Niemann has been 15th in the world. Martin Kaymer and Louis Oosthuizen – major pedigree there. There is plenty of sap in Branden Grace and Leishman. The 'old boys' - Phil Mickelson, Paul Casey, Henrik Stenson, Bubba Watson, Lee Westwood, Graeme McDowell – may have more yesterdays than tomorrows, sure. But they remain ridiculously good. And they've won big things. And they have famous heads. And their competitive fires, don't laugh, burn hot. You don't win as much as these people without being stupid-competitive.

End of the day, say what you will about the format, the money, the characters, the lack of character, LIV Golf is interesting.

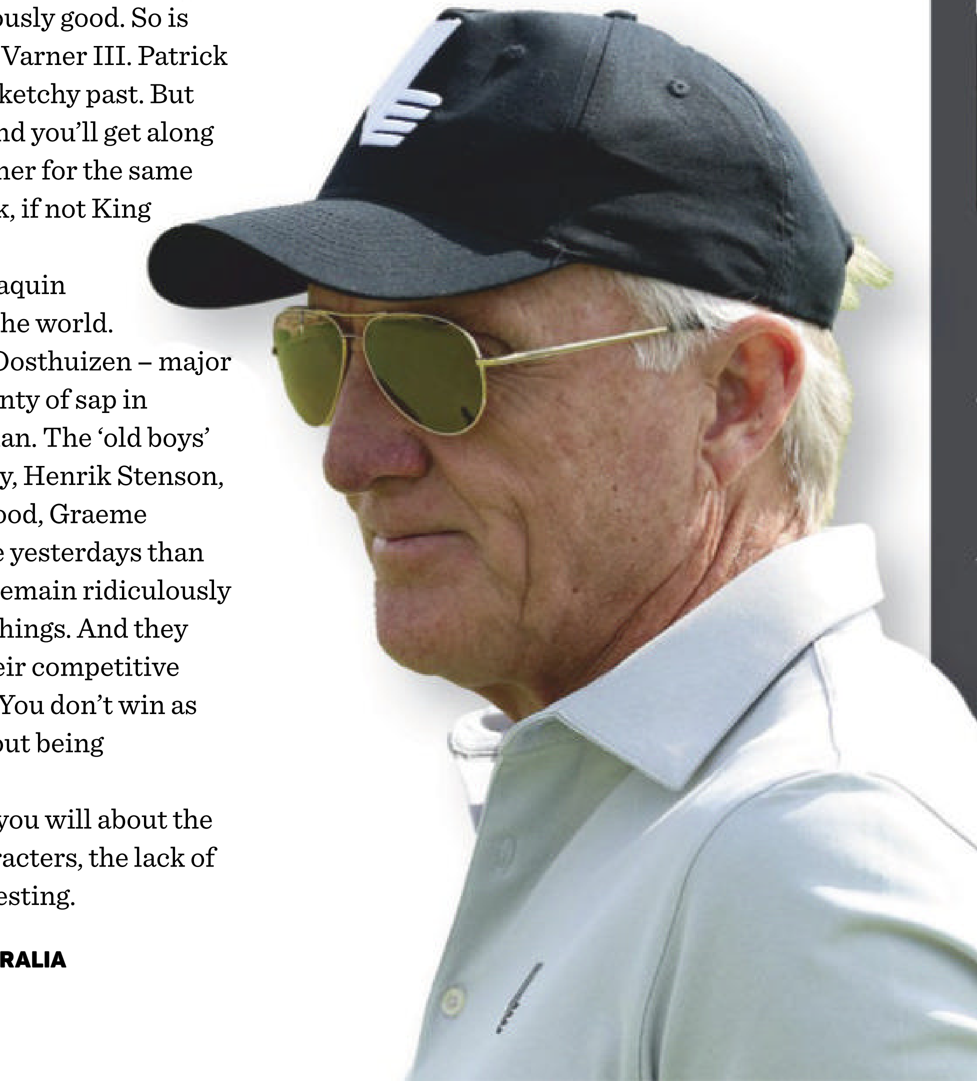
For so long we've been fed the PGA Tour's cookie-cutter: each tournament a 72-hole template of the one the week before and after, only the sponsor's and private country club's name changing.

Outside Augusta National, the seaside bits of Pebble Beach and the 17th hole at Sawgrass, the PGA Tour's courses are effectively indistinguishable. They're generic. Templates. It's like, it's worked for McDonald's and the Holiday Inn, it'll work for the PGA Tour.

It's all so samey. The first 36 holes of any PGA Tour tournament are perfunctory dross useful only to delineate which long-legged college boy and clone of Cameron Champ will play on the weekend. That's the storyline: who won't play the weekend. And that's over-rated. Why have a show without the stars?

The PGA Tour has needed an enema for a long time. Yet instead of trying something different, the bean-counters went with 'more is more' and gave us a wrap-around season which kicked off a fortnight after it finished.

Madness. Had the PGA Tour tried to improve itself with something novel – say, a team's event, 54 holes, no cuts and a shotgun start – or something, anything – it's arguable LIV Golf would even exist.



WHERE THE PARTY IS GOING AFTER ADELAIDE

APRIL 28-30
SINGAPORE
Sentosa GC – Serapong Course

MAY 12-14
UNITED STATES
Cedar Ridge CC, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma

MAY 26-28
UNITED STATES
Trump National GC, Washington D.C.

JUNE 30-JULY 2
SPAIN
Real Club Valderrama, Sotogrande, Spain

JULY 7-9
ENGLAND
Centurion Club, London

AUGUST 4-6
UNITED STATES
The Old White Course, White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia

AUGUST 11-13
UNITED STATES
Trump National GC, Bedminster, New Jersey

SEPTEMBER 22-24
UNITED STATES
Rich Harvest Farms, Sugar Grove, Illinois

OCTOBER 20-22
UNITED STATES
Trump National Doral, Miami, Florida

NOVEMBER 3-5
SAUDI ARABIA
Royal Greens Golf & Country Club, Jeddah

Port Fairy
Golf Links

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The Port Fairy Golf Club was established in 1899 and is now situated on the outskirts of the picturesque Port Fairy township. A little more than a 3-hour drive from Melbourne, Port Fairy Golf Links is fast becoming one of Australia's must play golfing destinations.

Former European Tour Player, Port Fairy Golf Links Developer & *Golf Australia Architecture* Editor Mike Clayton - a round at Port Fairy "is one of the best value for money rounds in the world."

A genuine links golf experience doesn't require a 24 - hour flight to Great Britain or Ireland as there's an absolute beauty in our own backyard. - *Golf Australia Magazine*

"Playing 18 Holes at Port Fairy is the best value golf you can play in Australia."
- *Golf Australia Magazine* (October 2020)

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TIPS FROM THE GAME'S TOP PLAYERS & COACHES

learn

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

ADAM SCOTT

PERFECT IRON IMPACT

It is golf's moment of truth. That split second when the clubhead smacks into the back of the ball and, hopefully, comes out of the centre of the clubface.

If your grip, set-up, takeaway, backswing and downswing are in good order, you should be in a great position to make a powerful strike at the ball, like **Adam Scott** is doing here.

Scott is one of the game's finest iron players and there are some key points to note about his perfect impact here.

- As the club meets the ball, Scott's hands are ideally slightly past the ball, with the shaft tilted toward the target.
- The clubhead will strike the ball an instant before hitting the turf. As the iron swing creates a downward blow, most shots should produce a divot just beyond where the ball lies.
- Adam's right knee is pointing inward at the target, while his left hip has 'cleared', meaning it has rotated left of the target, with the right hip now coming around toward the ball.
- Lastly, his shoulders are square to the target line and his weight is moving slightly into his left side, as you can see his right foot coming slightly off the ground.

AARON BADDELEY

PULL YOUR RIGHT FOOT BACK

In early 2021, a struggling Aaron Baddeley sought advice from renowned swing coach Butch Harmon.

Baddeley's ball-striking had dropped off, as had his confidence. Harmon gave the four-time PGA Tour winner a swing drill that had been passed down to him by his father, Claude.

He advised the dual Australian Open Champion to pull his right foot back at address, with his driver and his irons. It resulted in a dramatic improvement in his swing. So much so that Baddeley has taken the 'swing drill' to the course and now uses this Harmon tip with every full swing in competition.

This technique has a great legacy. Ben Hogan, for one, often used this technique and is probably where Harmon senior first saw it in action.

Pulling the right foot (for right-handers) back has two main benefits.

1. It aids in a better shoulder turn, which improves your backswing.
2. You will have a shallower angle of attack, which leads to a better downswing.

A good shoulder turn is sometimes difficult for amateurs. Their own body (their right side) is what typically gets in the way and can restrict a good shoulder turn. If you were to somehow suppress (or eliminate) the right side completely, you would be left with an unobstructed shoulder turn.

This is easily accomplished by pulling your right foot back, like Baddeley is seen doing here. This simple modification can produce a dramatic change in your swing – and in your ability to strike the ball powerfully.

Here's how to do it.

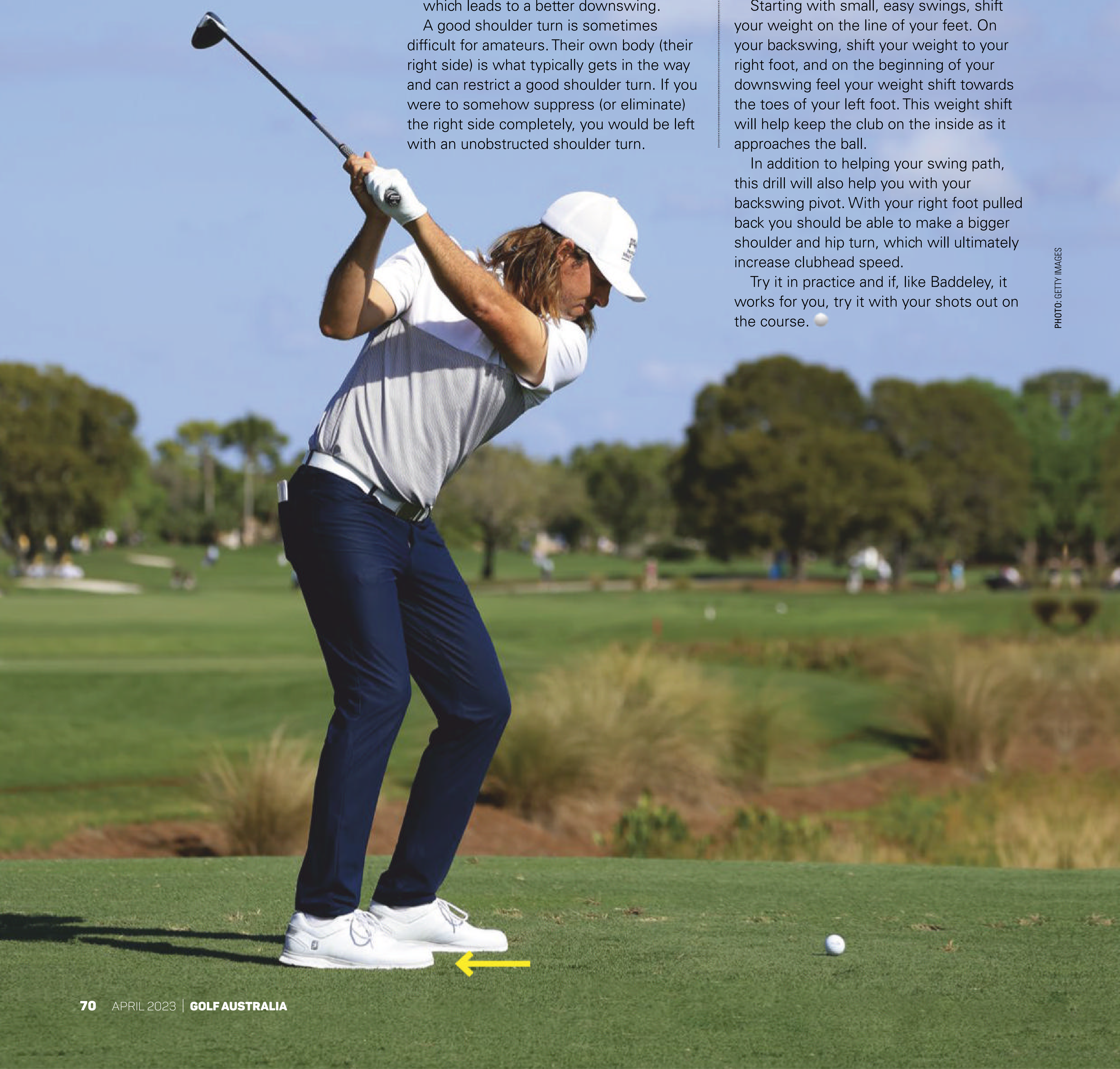
Start with a 7-iron and the ball teed down close to the centre of a normal stance.

Now pull your right foot back off the target line until your right toe is even with middle of your left foot. This stance will immediately give you the feeling you can easily swing into the ball from inside the target line.

Starting with small, easy swings, shift your weight on the line of your feet. On your backswing, shift your weight to your right foot, and on the beginning of your downswing feel your weight shift towards the toes of your left foot. This weight shift will help keep the club on the inside as it approaches the ball.

In addition to helping your swing path, this drill will also help you with your backswing pivot. With your right foot pulled back you should be able to make a bigger shoulder and hip turn, which will ultimately increase clubhead speed.

Try it in practice and if, like Baddeley, it works for you, try it with your shots out on the course.



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BOMB YOUR DRIVER

A coach and caddie attack on your tee game from the internet's most successful golf coaches

PHOTOGRAPHY **ANGUS MURRAY**

YOUR COACHES

ME AND MY GOLF

Piers Ward and Andy Proudman are the founders of golf's most successful online coaching system, Me and My Golf. Their informative, interactive and empowering content has won them nearly two million followers across their social platforms and more than 300 million views across YouTube, Facebook and Instagram.

At Me and My Golf, we now have just under two million followers across our digital platforms. We earnestly believe this incredible figure is down to the two key principles that underpin everything we do:

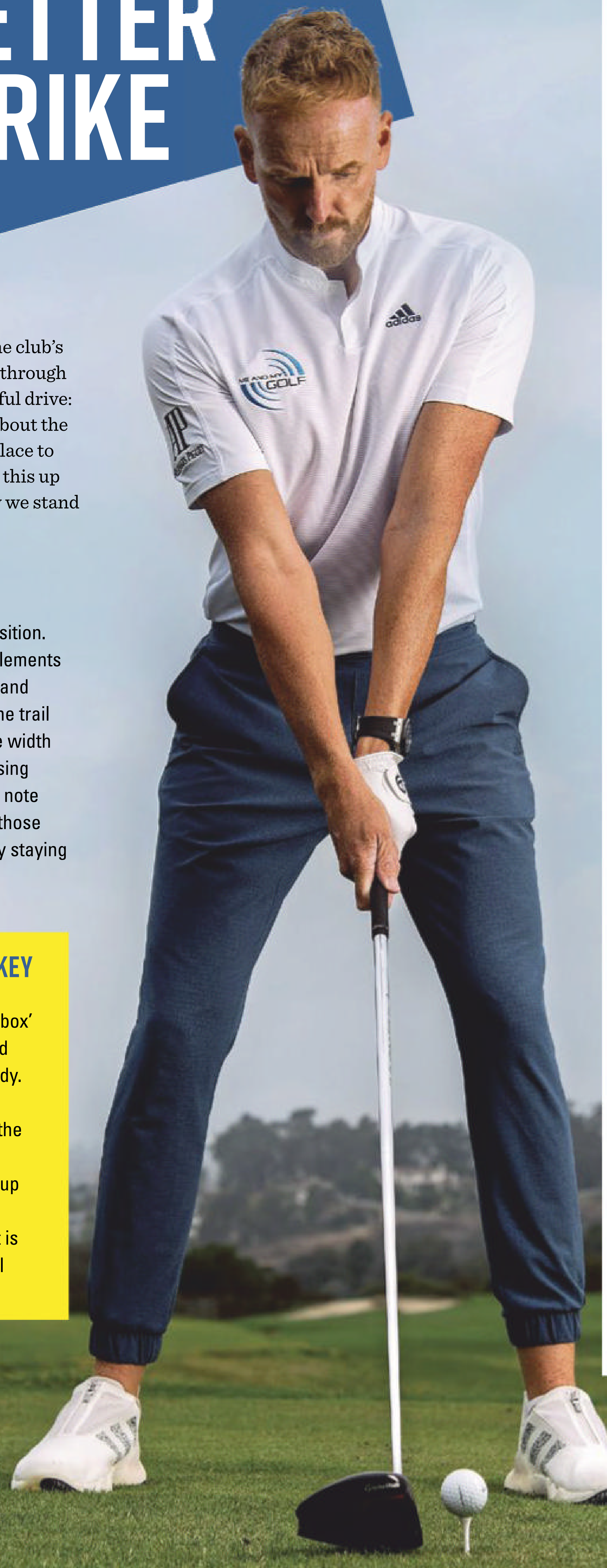
■ **We keep it simple.** The more time we spend with the world's best golfers, the more we are struck by how uncomplicated they make the game for themselves – an approach we aim to pass on.

■ **We don't get too technical.** Instead, we like to guide you towards proven concepts that will help you see the swing in a clearer and more effective light.

You will see both elements at work in this special feature, designed to make you a better driver of the golf ball. But there is also a third element at work. We are passionate about making you not just better swingers, but also better golfers. Technical progress is great, but it's of little practical value if you are taking poor playing practices and strategies to the course. Here we will act as your coach and your caddie, with five tips each to make sure both sides of your game receive their due attention. Experience has shown us that in your ongoing quest to improve your game, this dual approach really is the best way forward. ▶

COACH CONCEPT 1

STAY 'IN THE BOX' FOR A BETTER STRIKE



PIERS SAYS: We know the club's attack angle and swing path through impact are vital to a successful drive: but not everyone is so sure about the building blocks we need in place to promote them. We can clear this up with a simple picture of how we stand at address.

SET-UP
PICTURE YOUR BOX

Take a look at this address position. We can see some desirable elements here – ball off the lead instep and weight marginally favouring the trail foot. But for now, focus on the width of stance. Picture two lines rising vertically from my feet … and note how my shoulders are within those lines. This is what we mean by staying 'in the box' at address.

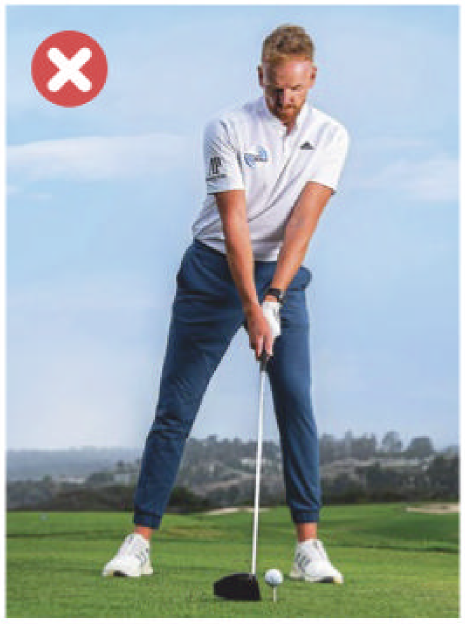
BOX CLEVER: KEY BENEFITS

Setting up 'in the box' means your torso is stacked nicely above your lower body.

- This sets the low point of the swing's arc opposite the lead heel, promoting the ideal, sweeping, level-to-up attack angle.
- Assuming your alignment is sound, it sets up a neutral swing path through ball.

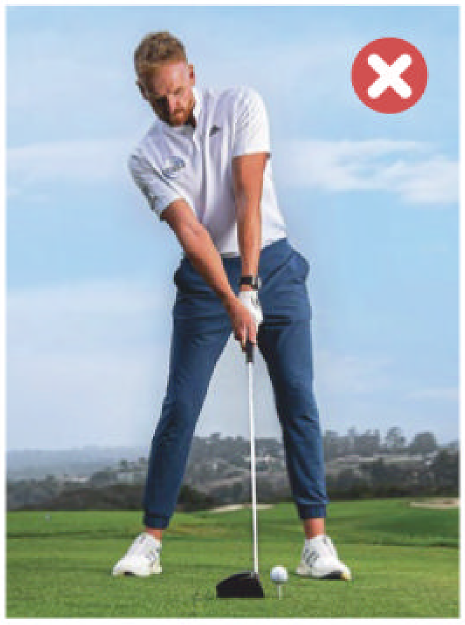
AVOID THESE

An 'in-the-box' set-up might look pretty natural, and you may think you will find this position without much problem. Our experience tells a different story. Club golfers are invariably unaware of these two classic errors:



TARGET LEAN

Crashing forward through the front side of the 'box', this awkward stance can be caused by poor weight distribution, a weak grip or just a flawed concept of what you are trying to achieve. Expect steep, choppy strikes, weak slices and the occasional pull hook.

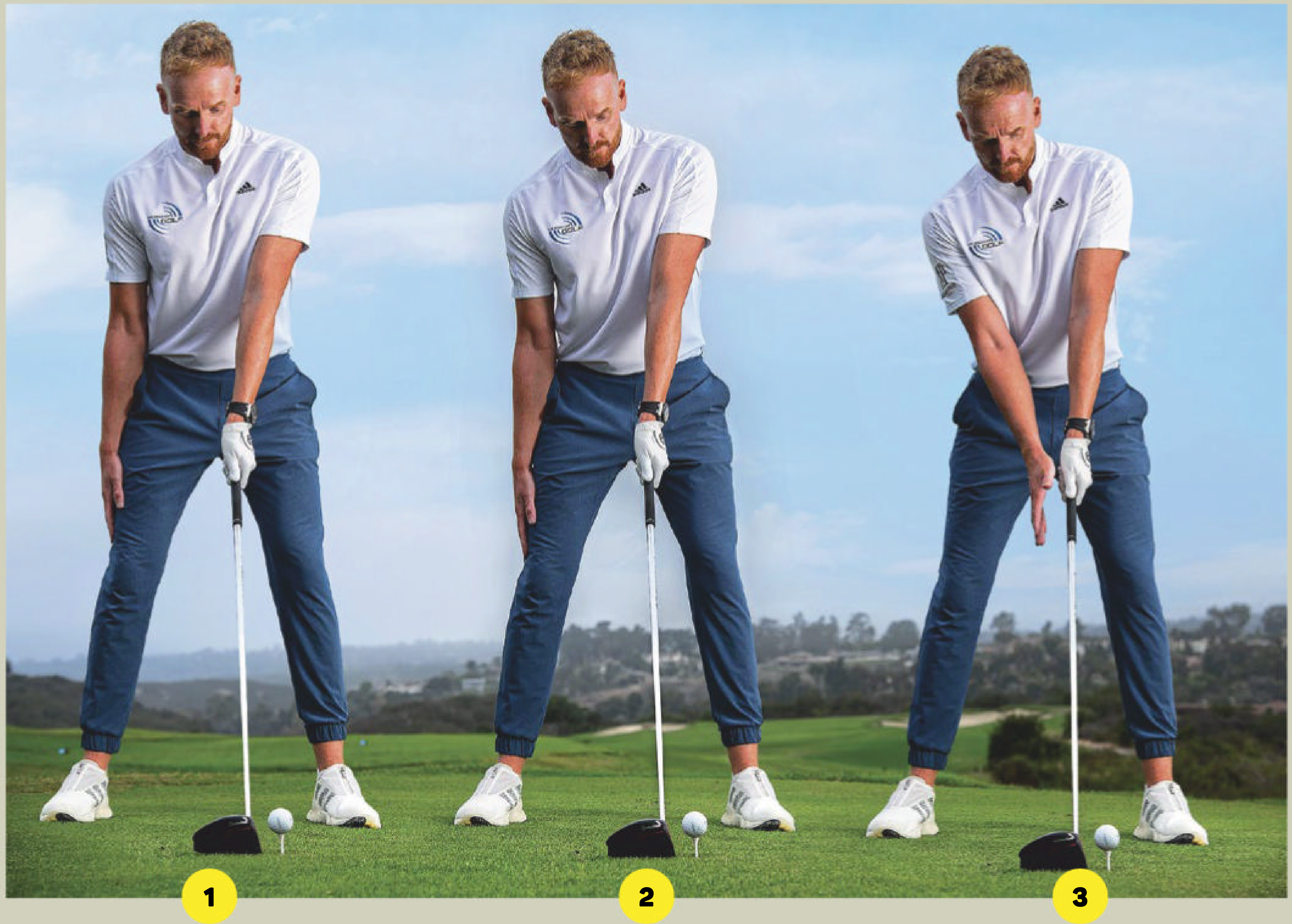


TRAIL SHOULDER DROP

Arguably more common. This leant-away position tends to be caused by golfers trying too hard to launch the ball upwards. It sees the club bottom out too early and create an excessively upward, in-to-out attack path. As a result, you can expect poor striking, plenty of hooks and the odd block to the right (right-handers).

DRILL: FINDING THE BOX

Use this easy three-step exercise to train the ideal set-up



1 Address the ball with your lead hand only. Ensure a neutral torso – leaning neither forwards nor back – by checking your shirt buttons are over your belt buckle. Place your trail hand against the side of your trail thigh.

2 Slide your trail hand down the outside of your leg until the fingers are opposite the top of the knee cap. You will feel your trail shoulder dropping slightly, but staying within the confines of the 'box'.

3 From here, bring the hand forwards – palm facing the target – and place it on the grip. You have now orientated your upper body perfectly for the ideal path and attack angle.

ANDY PROUDMAN

TEXT & IMAGES: © BAUER CONSUMER MEDIA LIMITED

CADDIE CONCEPT 1

THREE-POINT CHECKLIST

ANDY SAYS: The drive is arguably the most unfocused shot in golf. We have the widest target, the most options and the largest variety of hazards. Because of this, it is easy to step into the shot in an equally vague frame of mind; but, as in any walk of life, without a clear and specific objective your chances of success plummet. So sharpen your intention; addressing these three elements will pull your viewfinder into focus and set you up for a successful shot:

1. Where do I absolutely NOT want to miss? Usually this is pretty obvious with trees, water or OB the usual no-go areas. Identify the area, log it, then move on to more positive visualisations.

2. Which target gives me the widest margin for error? Look for the side of the fairway flanked by light rough, or without fairway sand.

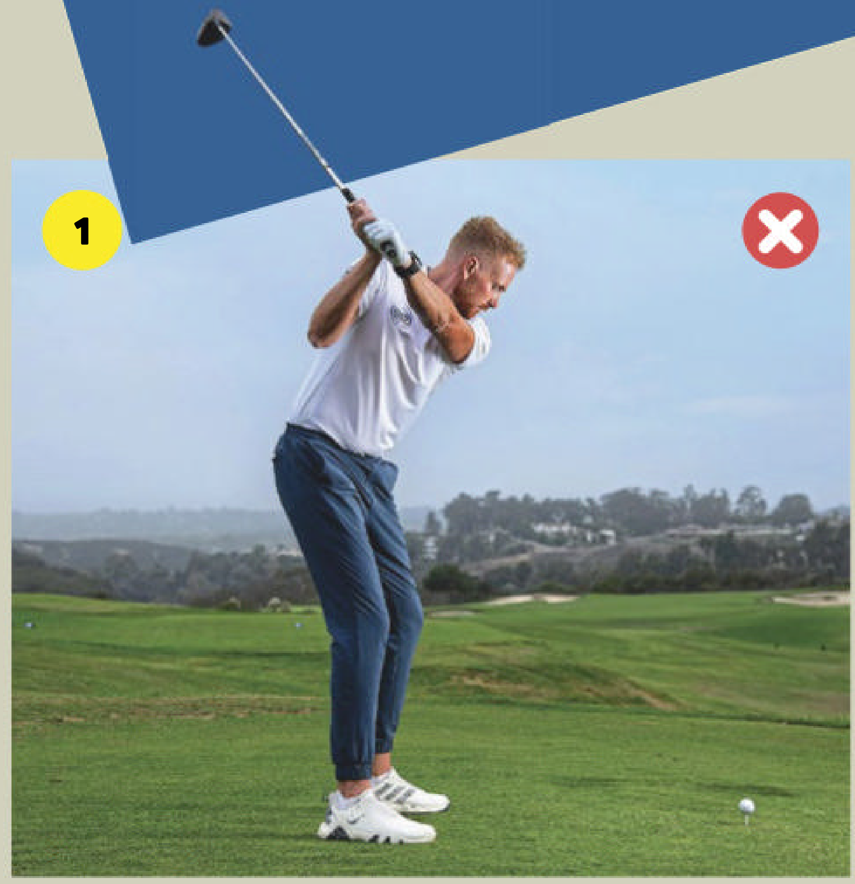
3. Which shot feels most comfortable? Comfort breeds confidence, which boosts a successful outcome.

Answer these three questions honestly and the shot you are left with will be your best play. Every time. ▶

COACH CONCEPT 2

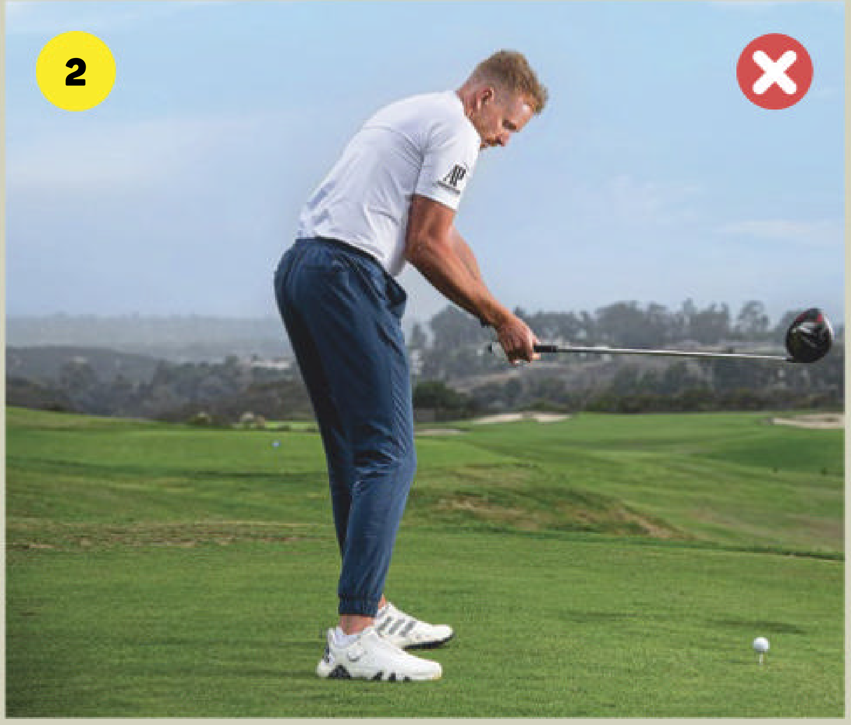
LET YOUR LEGS UNLOCK YOUR SWING

PIERS SAYS: There is a swing pattern we see in club golfers time and again, which we can best describe as a reluctance to move. Club golfers are often afraid to shift and rotate, reasoning it feels safer to hold a position over the ball. We are yet to see a single golfer thrive through this concept. Movement is good as long as it's the right movement ... and that's what we'll uncover in this section.



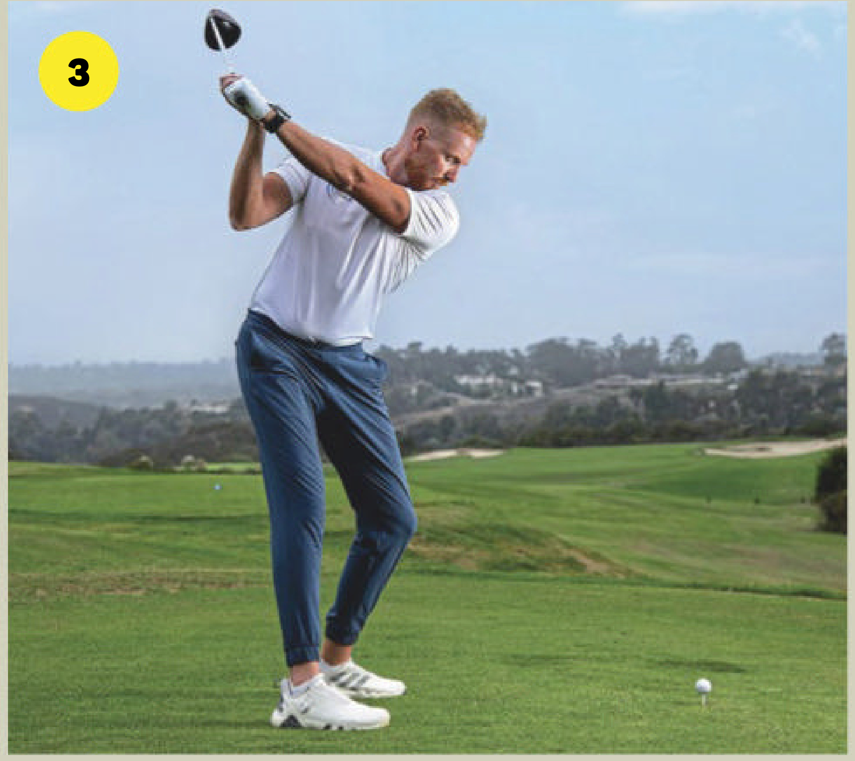
THE PROBLEM WITH STAYING STILL

This is a pretty good facsimile of the backswing we see all the time. Afraid to get too far from the comfort of the address position, the golfer simply lifts the club up with their hands and arms. There is minimal shift and rotation and the swing becomes too steep.



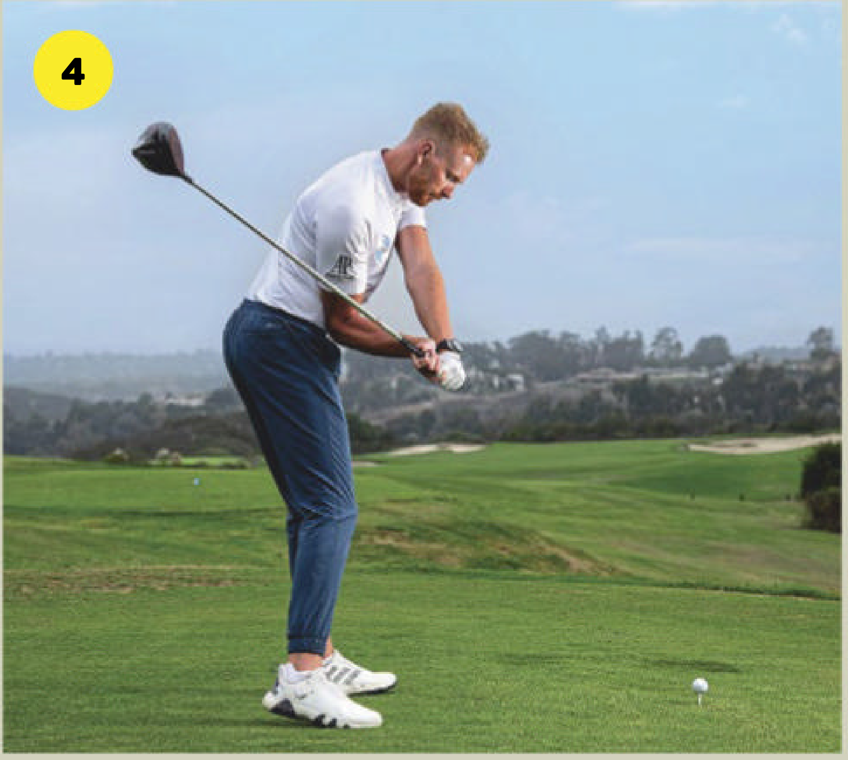
NO ROOM FOR MANOEUVRE

Inevitably from that top-of-the-backswing position, the downswing becomes steep and crowded. The golfer typically makes weak, armsy swipes across the ball. While there might be a certain logic in trying to maintain a position, it just doesn't work in practice.



FREEDOM TO MOVE

Let's now compare those poor positions with a couple of good ones. This time I've given myself permission to shift and rotate throughout the backswing. With the core more engaged, the motion clearly becomes 'deeper', the trail hip and shoulder moving more behind me … and this freer motion sets my arms and the club on a much shallower path.



INSIDE TRACK

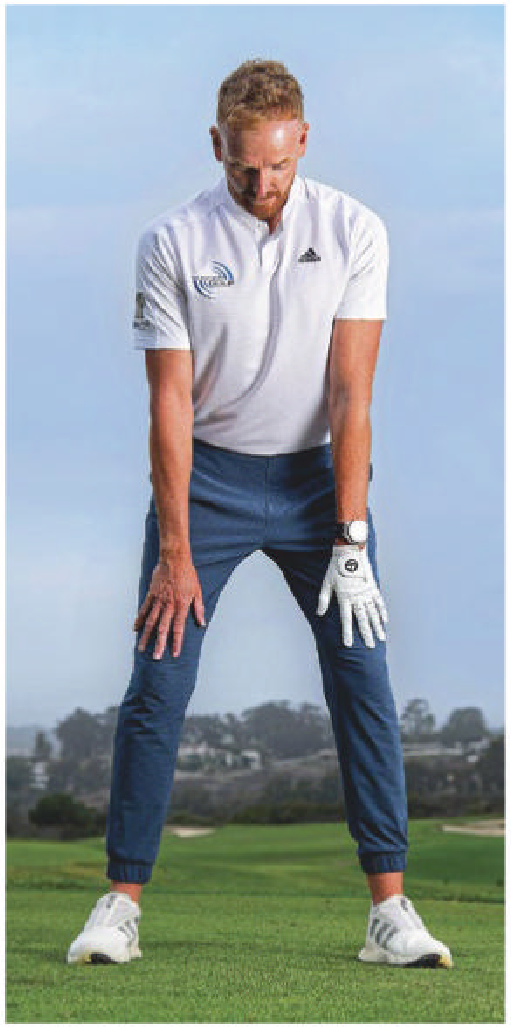
The benefits of that much better-organised and co-ordinated backswing show up best in the downswing path; from that shallower position at the top, the club can now attack the ball correctly from inside the ball-target line. But that's a position you can find only when you give yourself permission to move.

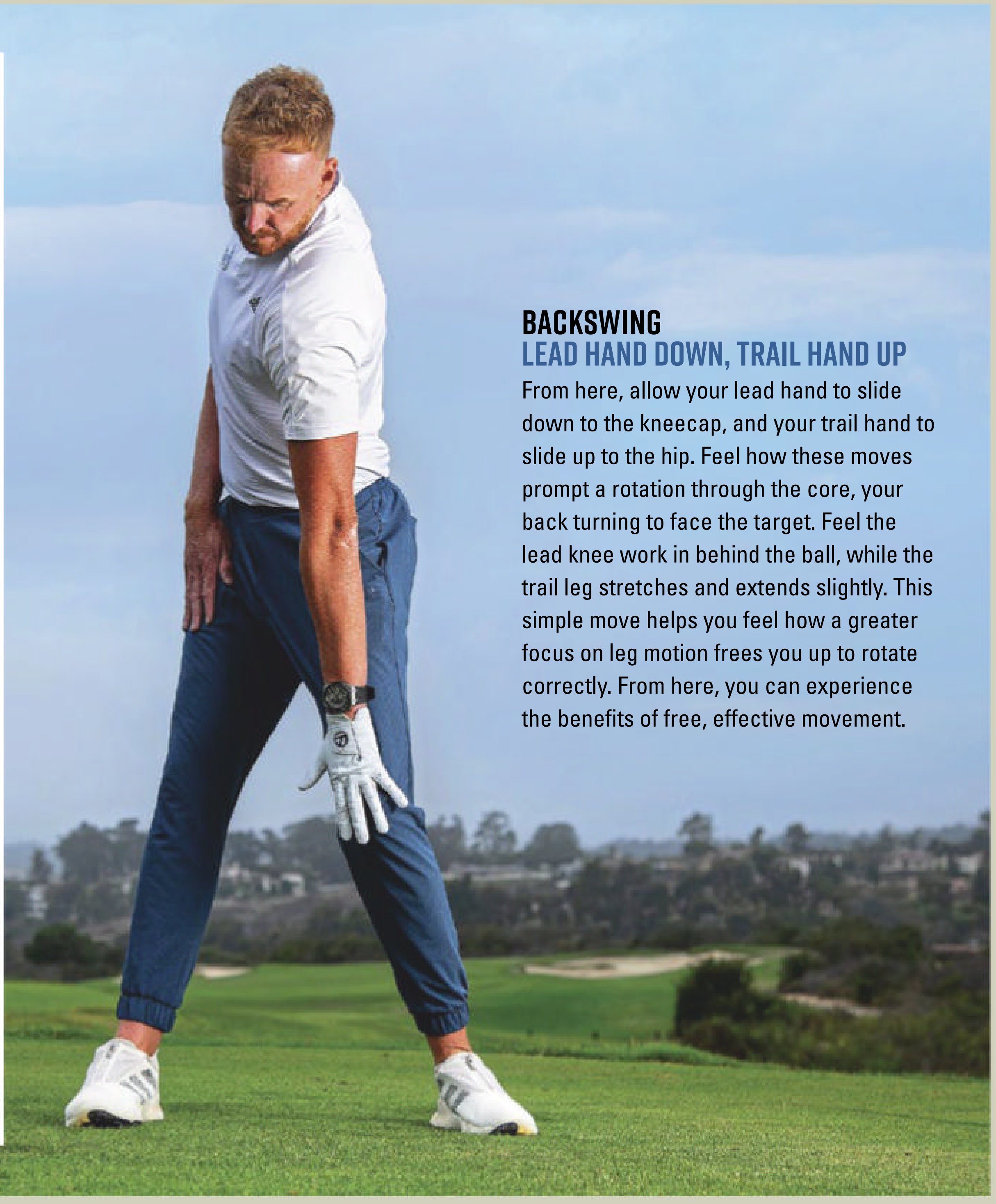
FREE UP YOUR MOTION: DO THE LEGWORK

Now for the million-dollar question: how do you free up your swing without losing control? Look again at those two top-of-the-backswing positions and you will see a key difference in the legwork. In the static position, the knees have barely moved from address: in the good position, there is a clear gap between them. Yes, more dynamic legwork is the key to good, safe movement. Here is an exercise to train it ...

SET-UP
PALMS ON LEGS

Begin by standing in your address posture. Keep your weight 50-50. Place your palms against the front of both thighs.





BACKSWING
LEAD HAND DOWN, TRAIL HAND UP

From here, allow your lead hand to slide down to the kneecap, and your trail hand to slide up to the hip. Feel how these moves prompt a rotation through the core, your back turning to face the target. Feel the lead knee work in behind the ball, while the trail leg stretches and extends slightly. This simple move helps you feel how a greater focus on leg motion frees you up to rotate correctly. From here, you can experience the benefits of free, effective movement.

CADDIE CONCEPT 2

SPEND TIME ON THE TARGET LINE

ANDY SAYS: One of the things that makes golf such a challenging game is that we play it side-on to our target.

Alignment is a fundamental of good golf, yet squaring up to a target 200 yards or more away is no easy task – especially so if you have not given yourself a clear picture of your chosen line.

The best position to do this, of course, is directly behind the ball-target line, facing down it. Ideally, raise the club as shown, using the shaft to line up the ball and ultimate target. Look for and register reference points through the shaft that will help you define your line.

With that information gathered and the line better defined, your chances of finding good alignment are dramatically improved when you step into the ball. ▶

COACH CONCEPT 3

‘LOADING’ THE BACKSWING

THE SOURCE OF EASY POWER

PIERS SAYS: With the latest performance tracking systems showing the importance of distance to your score, your driver swing needs to be powerful as well as controlled. Here, you’ll learn a fantastic way to add dynamism to your action. We call it ‘loading the backswing’. With one easy-to-execute move you can give your swing a wealth of yard-eating benefits. Here’s how it works ...

1. ADDRESS: FEET TOGETHER

Take your regular stance, but with your feet together. Don’t use a ball for this exercise but swing to a tee, which should be directly opposite your insteps.

2. MOVE AWAY: STEP AND TURN

From this start we are going to move into the backswing by taking a strong step away from the target with the trail foot. Swing the club away as you do this. Make the movement punchy and purposeful. You’ll experience a strong ‘step and turn’ sensation, the arms and upper body free to swing and coil over a more mobile and active trail leg.

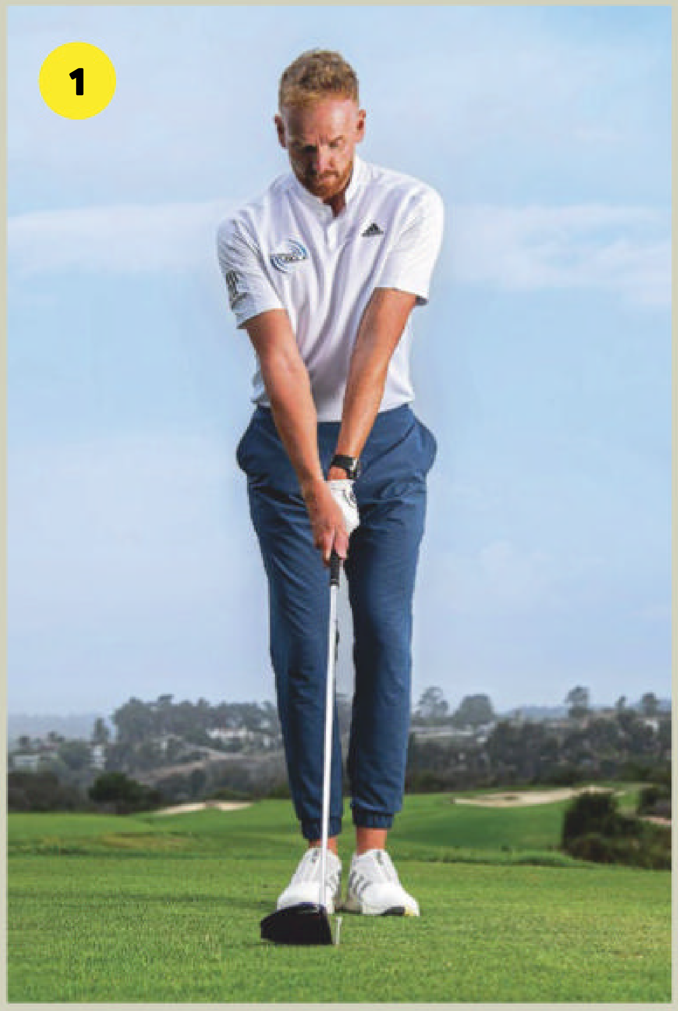
3. TAKE IT TO THE TOP

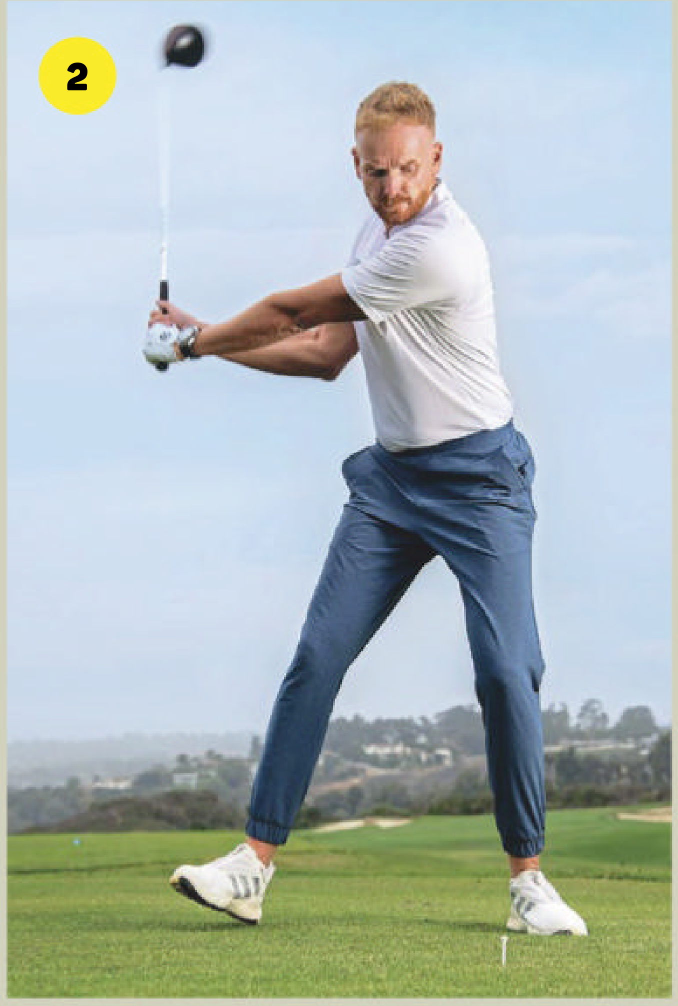
With the momentum gained from that aggressive step back, completing the backswing comes naturally. This image shows what we mean by ‘loading’ the backswing:

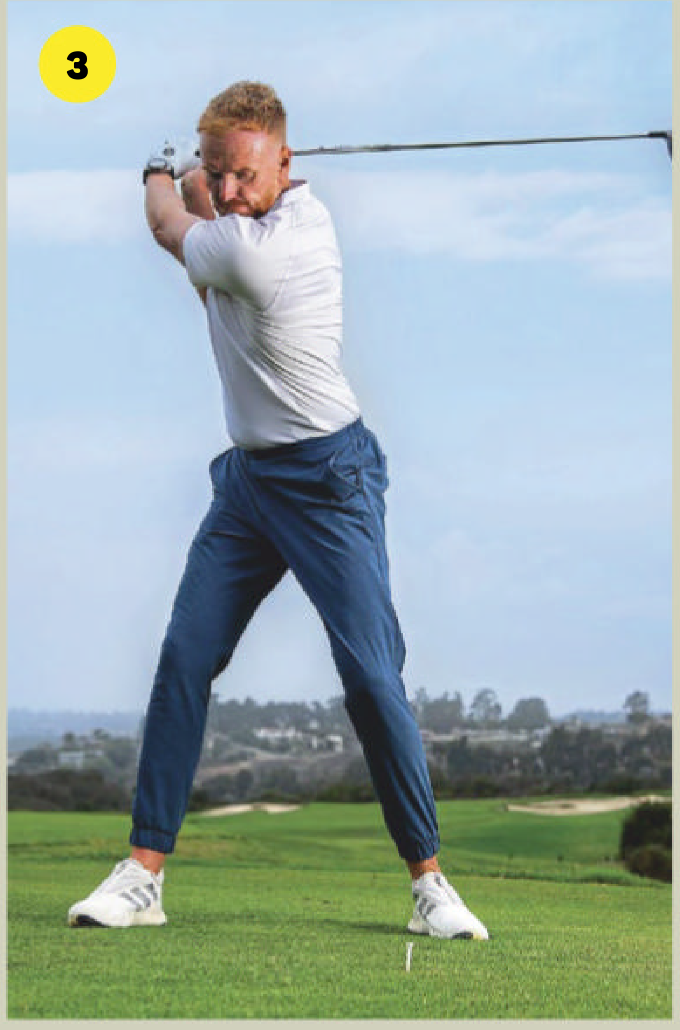
- The upper body has coiled fully, the back now facing the target.
- That rotation fires pressure into a braced trail leg.
- Your body feels spring-loaded, and now ready to unwind powerfully into the downswing.

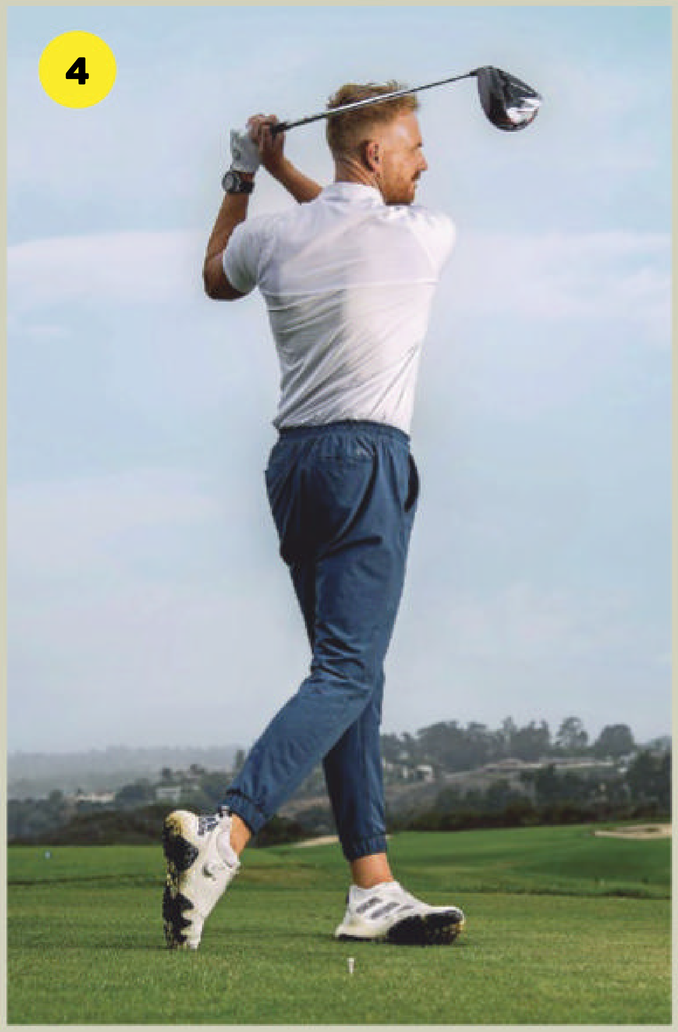
4. NOW COMPLETE THE SWING

Yes, the Step-and-turn drill is all about the backswing, but don’t leave it there. Swing through to a finish to gain a feel for how that loaded position at the top drives the downswing and fires speed into your action.



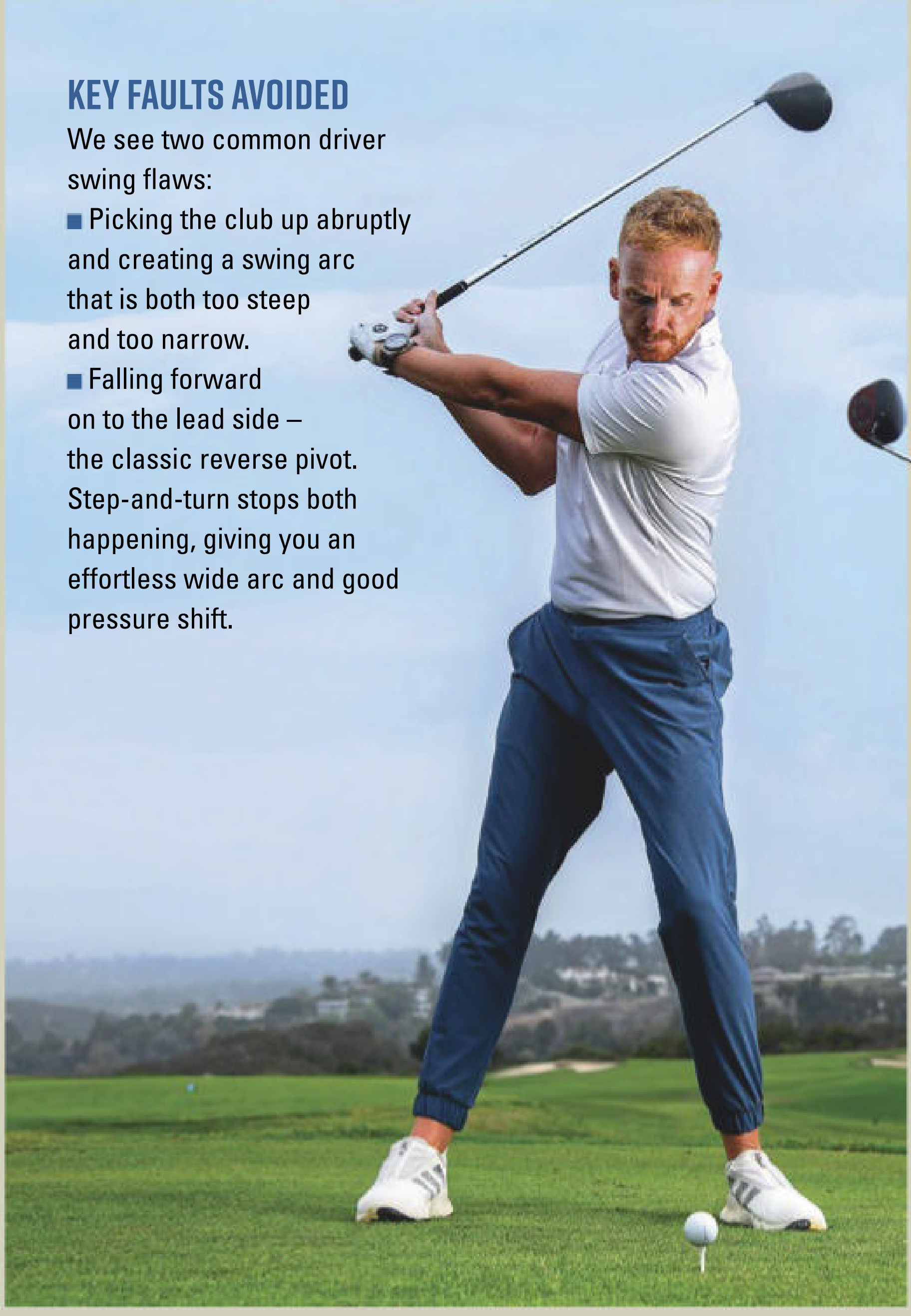






BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

Non-technical and instinctive, the Step-and-turn drill is an incredibly easy drill to work with. But it gives your action several key benefits:

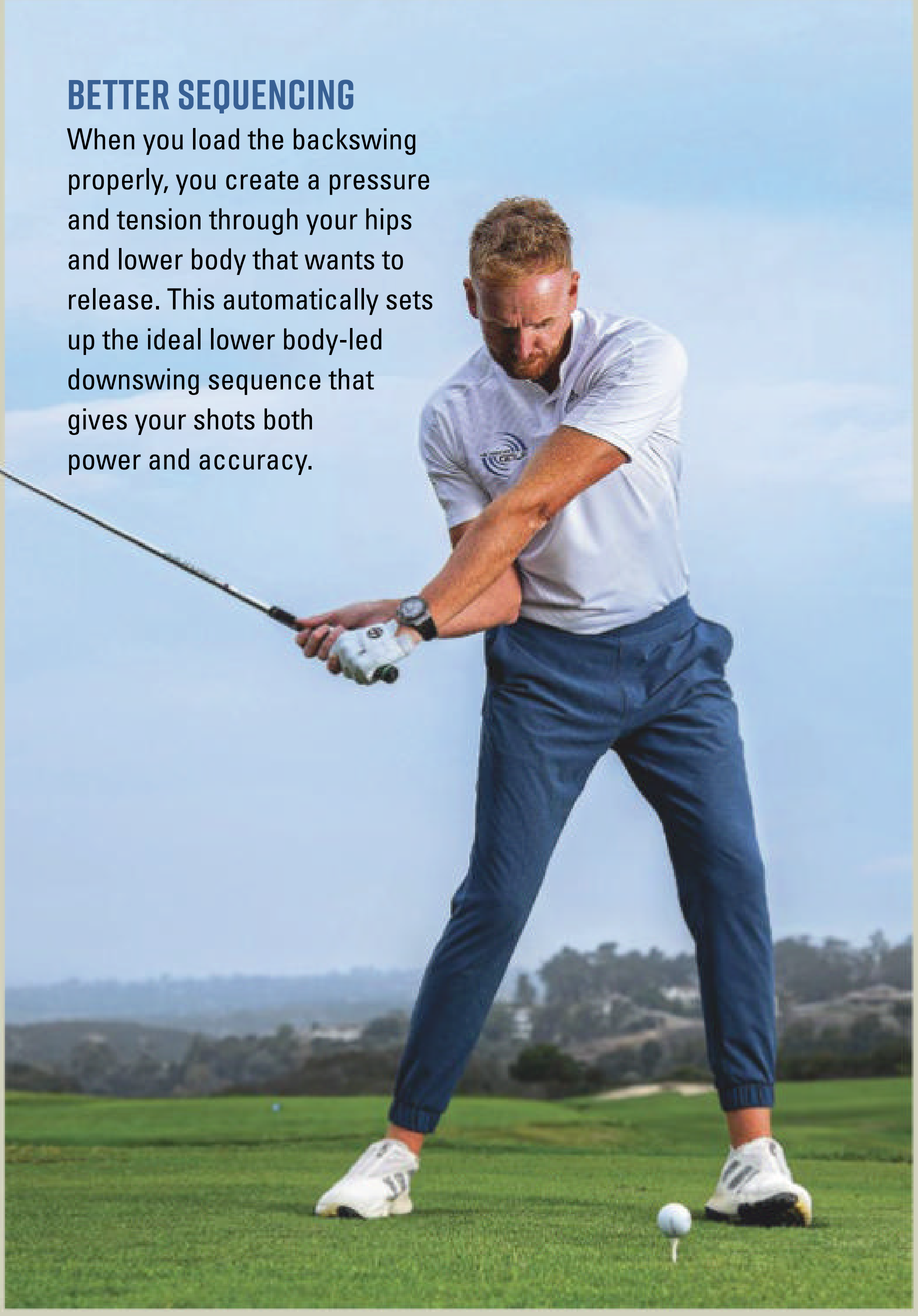


KEY FAULTS AVOIDED

We see two common driver swing flaws:

- Picking the club up abruptly and creating a swing arc that is both too steep and too narrow.
- Falling forward on to the lead side – the classic reverse pivot.

Step-and-turn stops both happening, giving you an effortless wide arc and good pressure shift.



BETTER SEQUENCING

When you load the backswing properly, you create a pressure and tension through your hips and lower body that wants to release. This automatically sets up the ideal lower body-led downswing sequence that gives your shots both power and accuracy.

CADDIE CONCEPT 3

A SIMPLE ROUTINE FOR AIMING YOUR BODY

ANDY SAYS: If there's one thing that frustrates us at Me and My Golf, it's golfers setting up to the ball before looking up to gauge the target. Okay, you might get lucky; but more often your aim will fall left or right of your target, forcing inconsistency and compensation. In Concept 2 we discussed the importance of spending time behind the ball-target line; now we're going to see how that feeds into a reliable routine for pure alignment:

1. Come back behind the golf ball. Clarify your ball-target line. But pick a spot no more than 2ft in front of the ball, on that line.

2. Step into the shot and square the clubface to this near spot. With alignment the clubface is the most important thing and the element that must come first. Aiming at a target 2ft away is much easier than a fleck of fairway 200 yards away.

3. Take your address around the club. With your driver aimed well and in place, setting up around it ushers you into good, square form. Arrange feet, knees, hips and shoulders parallel to that ball-target line.

4. With everything in place, take a couple of looks up the fairway to reconnect with your ultimate target. But note it well; this step comes at the end of the process, and NOT the start! ▶

COACH CONCEPT 4

OPEN FACE? LET THE TOE WIN THE RACE

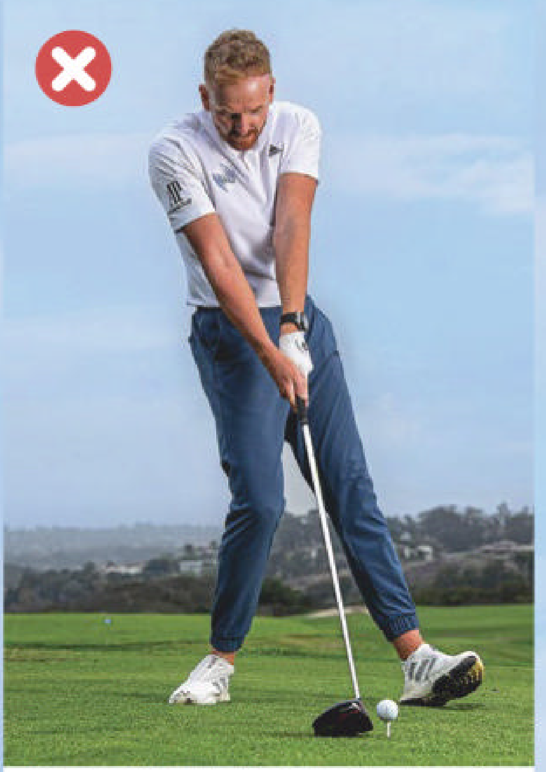
PIERS SAYS: We know that by far the most common driver shot is a slice – a shot that comes from an open clubface at impact. There are, of course, many technical elements that can cause a slice; but our recent ability to video our swings on phones and tablets has, perhaps, flagged one we've previously been unaware of ... and it relates to our practice swing.

CAUGHT ON CAMERA: OPEN FACE

At Me and My Golf, we routinely ask our remote students to send us a video of practice swings as well as swings to the ball. Of course, the practice swings generally look smoother and better-balanced. But they also reveal another trait: almost every time, we also see the clubface wide open as it approaches the ball.

BAD HABIT

Why should this be the case? Simply because, with no ball to hit, there is no need for us to work on getting that face square. And while a lagging, open face here might not seem to matter too much, we should be mindful that we are, in fact, training an open-face delivery through the practice swings we make.

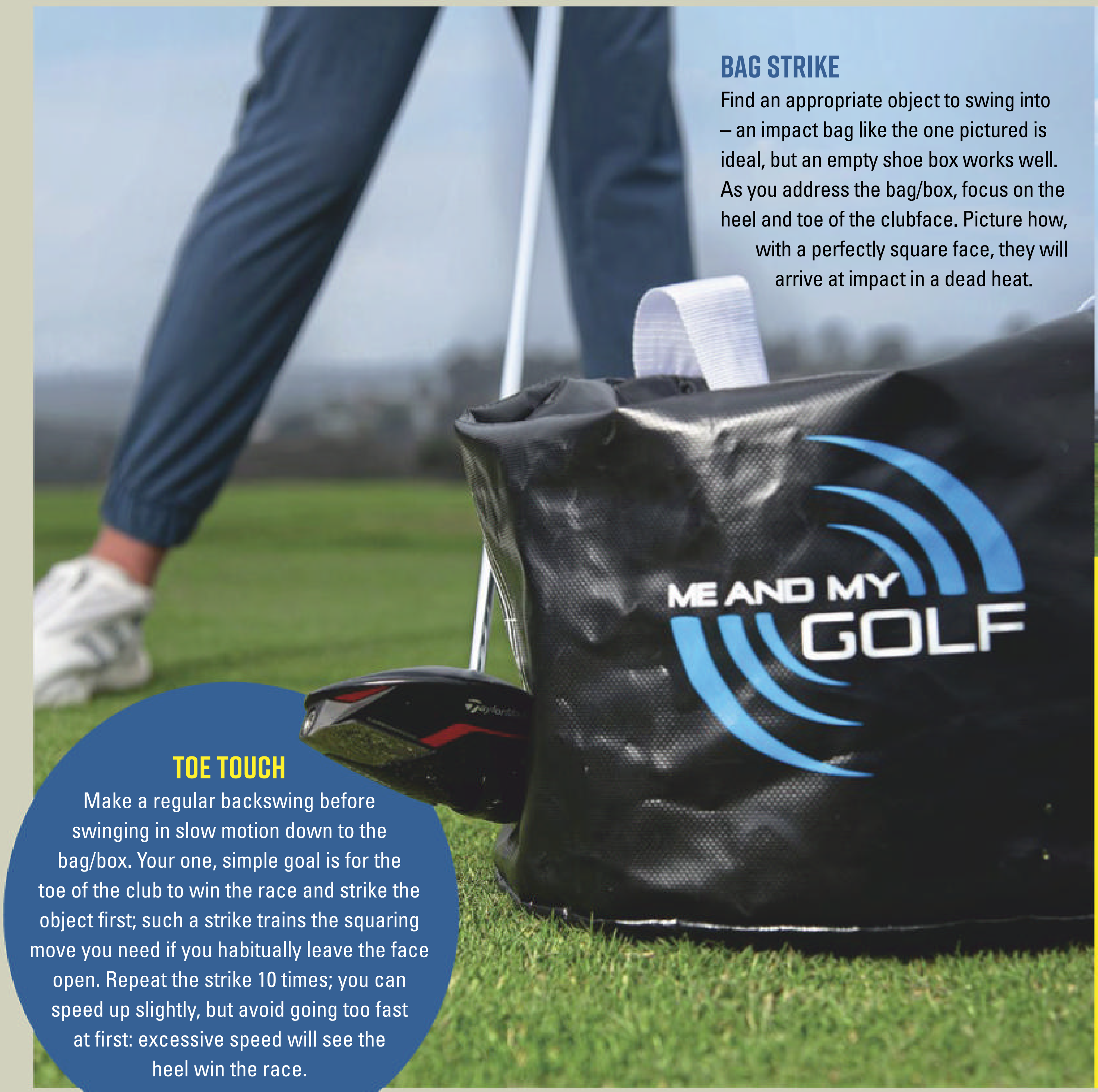


ON THE BACK FOOT

When we follow open-face practice swingers through to hitting shots, a common pattern emerges. We see them start to hang back on their trail sides coming into the ball and releasing the club early. Both moves are reactions to a growing awareness that the face is wide open, desperate last-minute attempts to get it square. But they lead to a weak and erratic shot pattern.

THE SOLUTION: TOE WINS THE RACE

If sliced drives are a common sight to you, we would urge you to video your practice swing and check the clubface as it approaches the ball. Chances are you will see the face looking at the sky as the shaft swings through parallel on the downswing. If that's the case, try this drill:



BAG STRIKE

Find an appropriate object to swing into – an impact bag like the one pictured is ideal, but an empty shoe box works well. As you address the bag/box, focus on the heel and toe of the clubface. Picture how, with a perfectly square face, they will arrive at impact in a dead heat.

TOE TOUCH

Make a regular backswing before swinging in slow motion down to the bag/box. Your one, simple goal is for the toe of the club to win the race and strike the object first; such a strike trains the squaring move you need if you habitually leave the face open. Repeat the strike 10 times; you can speed up slightly, but avoid going too fast at first: excessive speed will see the heel win the race.

POSITION CHECK

After working on this exercise, video your swing again. Check the position of the face as the clubshaft moves through parallel: in contrast to looking at the sky, it will ideally be looking slightly downward. This much squarer position means no more need for 11th-hour compensation, and more consistently straight drives. If the face is still open, keep working at that toe-first, heel-second impact.

CADDIE CONCEPT 4

ASK YOURSELF GOLF'S MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION

ANDY SAYS: "What would a good shot look like here?" Asking this apparently simple question is one of the best things you can do as you assess the drive in front of you.

Why? Because the answer it will inevitably trigger gives your brain a vital clear picture of what is required for this shot.

Only when your grey matter has such a clear mandate can it send the appropriate intentions and signals to your muscles.

The result is a unity of purpose between body and mind, the ideal breeding ground for confident and co-ordinated motion. This question is also the basis of creativity; that good shot you picture won't always look the same, and giving your mind and body permission to respond to whatever flight you see is the pathway to giving your game versatility and adaptability. ▶

COACH CONCEPT 5

DEVELOP A STRAIGHT-DRIVE SWING

PIERS SAYS: While hitting the ball a long way is an enjoyable and valuable part of golf, there are, of course, times when accuracy outranks distance. Every golfer needs a 'fairway finder' to call on at such times ... and developing this ability is as much about a change of attitude as technique. Work on these three key adjustments ...

HOLD THE POSE

For once we are going to start at the end. When you want to find the fairway, one of the simplest and best notions you can adopt is to picture a controlled and balanced finishing position, and swing to it. When accuracy is the order of the day, make it your policy to hold that position until the ball lands.

IRON EFFICIENCY

Looking at this position, you could almost confuse it with the finish we might look for with a mid-iron. There is a good reason for this; when you want to find the fairway, an iron-shot mentality is a great one to adopt. Here, we are looking to hit the ball a specific distance rather than as far as possible; bring this attitude to your driving and your fairways-hit stats will soar.

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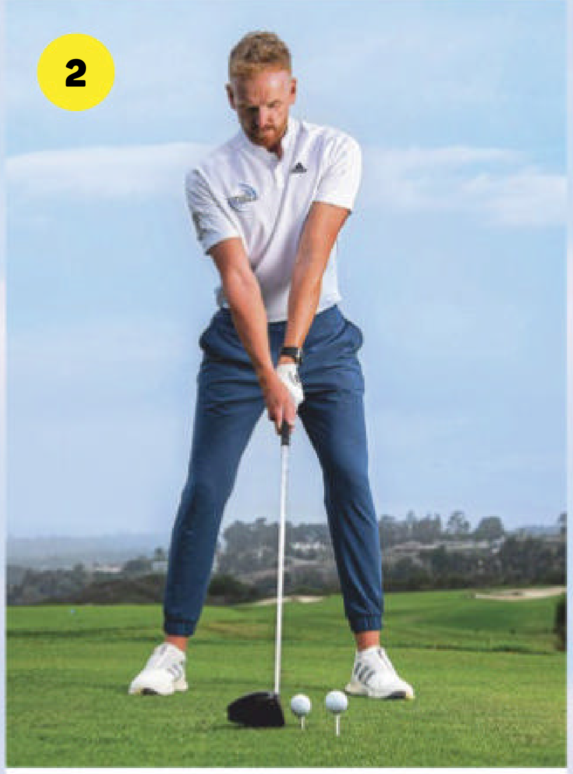
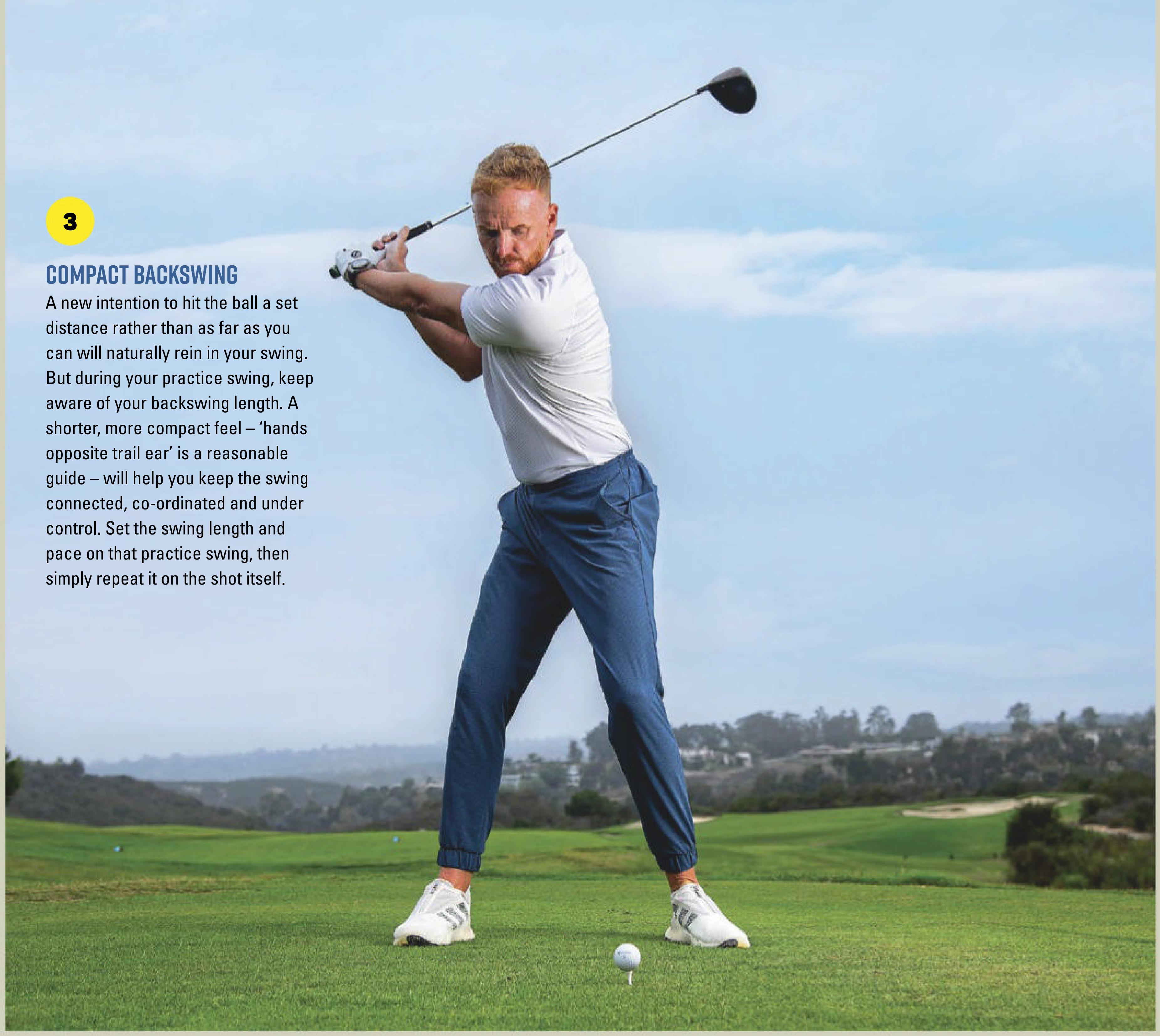


LOW TEE

Playing the driver off the lead instep with the crown of the driver about halfway up the ball is great for speed and launch, but it compromises control. Instead, play the ball a touch back in the stance and tee it down so the middle of the ball is opposite the centre of the face. A low-face strike should hold its line better, while a more level attack angle makes it easier to harness the trajectory of the shot.



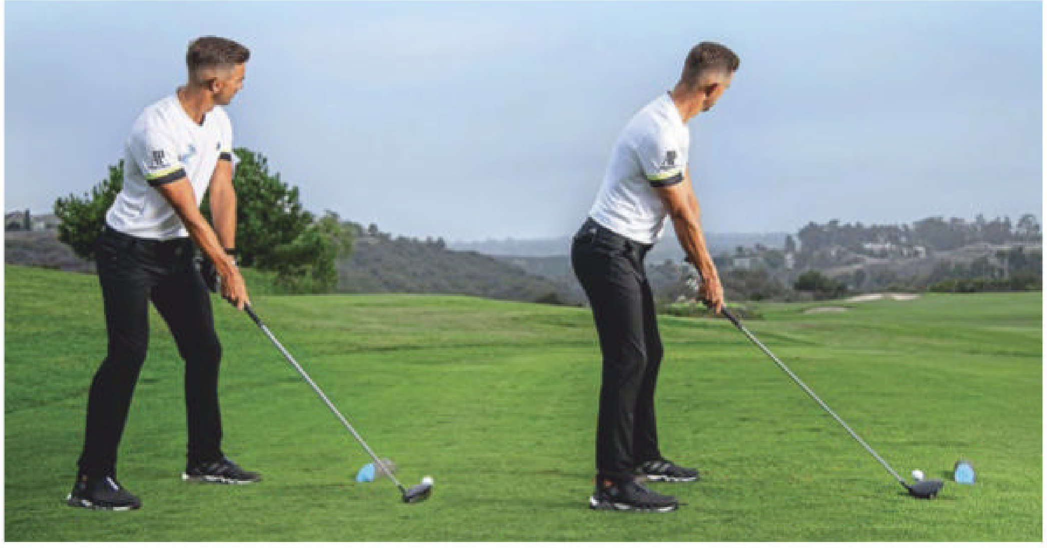
3

COMPACT BACKSWING

A new intention to hit the ball a set distance rather than as far as you can will naturally rein in your swing. But during your practice swing, keep aware of your backswing length. A shorter, more compact feel – 'hands opposite trail ear' is a reasonable guide – will help you keep the swing connected, co-ordinated and under control. Set the swing length and pace on that practice swing, then simply repeat it on the shot itself.

CADDIE CONCEPT 5

MAKE THE FAIRWAY WIDER



ANDY SAYS: There are ways to make the game easier or harder for ourselves. One of the best ways to make it harder is by playing the game with a two-way miss – in other words, hitting shots that shape both to the left and the right. If this is your game, you are instantly halving the width of the fairway, your only option being to aim down the middle and hope for limited curvature either way. The simple solution is to commit to moving the ball one way: fade, draw, it doesn't matter which. Just make it your shape, then develop it. One of the biggest benefits you will experience is a much wider fairway:

- Drawers Tee it up on the left and aim up the right (right-handers). If the draw fails to show you're still in play up the right, and if you overdo the shape a touch you are in the left rough at worst.
- Faders Tee it up on the right, and aim down the left. If it doesn't fade, you're left edge, and it takes a big old cut to find trouble to the right.

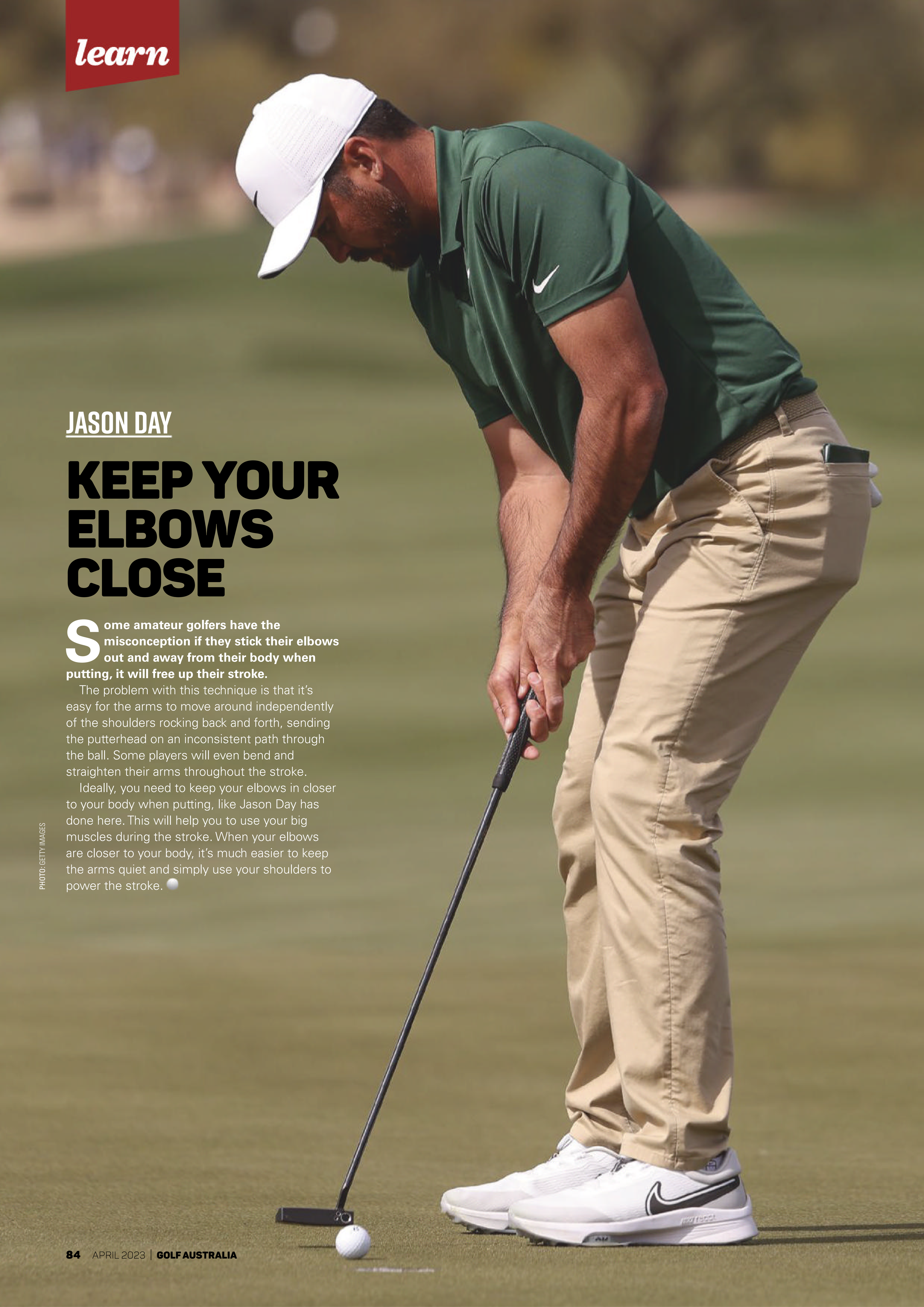


PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

JASON DAY

KEEP YOUR ELBOWS CLOSE

Some amateur golfers have the misconception if they stick their elbows out and away from their body when putting, it will free up their stroke.

The problem with this technique is that it's easy for the arms to move around independently of the shoulders rocking back and forth, sending the putterhead on an inconsistent path through the ball. Some players will even bend and straighten their arms throughout the stroke.

Ideally, you need to keep your elbows in closer to your body when putting, like Jason Day has done here. This will help you to use your big muscles during the stroke. When your elbows are closer to your body, it's much easier to keep the arms quiet and simply use your shoulders to power the stroke.

golf Australia
AUSTRALIA'S TOP 100
PUBLIC ACCESS COURSES
2023

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While the Nudgee Golf Club approaches its centenary, the land on which the club sits has been a traditional meeting place of the Turrbal people for thousands of years.

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play

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Sunshine Coast

QUEENSLAND CLASSICS

CHASE THE SUN

Leave your jumpers at home, pack the sunscreen and shorts and start planning a tilt at one of two open golf tournaments to be played on Queensland's beautiful Sunshine Coast.

Due to popular demand, Sunshine Coast Classic tournament organisers, Golf Sunshine Coast, have launched two 2023 events – the Winter Classic and the Spring Classic.

Registrations are open for the 2023 Sunshine Coast Classics, which will be played over 72 holes across four of the Sunshine Coast's best courses – Twin Waters, Maroochy River, Noosa Springs and Peregian.

The Sunshine Coast Winter Classic will be played from June 12, while the Spring Classic tees off on September 11. Both events are open to all players with a Golf Australia handicap.

Each tournament is an individual stableford competition, with daily prizes for men and women in A and B grades. There are also four approach prizes each day as well as prizes for the 72- hole event.

The entry fee – including four days of golf with carts, daily lunches, welcome and presentation functions plus a gift package – is available for $695 per player. Discounted accommodation is available through partners of the tournament including Coolum at the Beach, Noosa Springs Golf and Spa Resort, Newport Mooloolaba and Peninsular Beachfront Resort.

To read more about the tournaments, check out some of the available accommodation packages and book your spot in the field, visit www.golfsunshinecoast.com.au ▶

MAROOCHY RIVER GC

TWIN WATERS GC

PEREGIAN GC

PHOTOS: BRENDAN JAMES X 3; SUPPLIED X 2

BARNBOUGLE EVENT

FINE WINE & GOLF

If you like fantastic wine as much as you like playing great golf courses, here is the weekend away you simply cannot miss.

The third annual Halliday Barnbougle Cup, to be played from June 2 to 4, is sure to be a brilliant mix of fine wine and golf, as well as a bit of healthy competition.

Play on Barnbougle's prestigious world ranked courses – Dunes and Lost Farm *(pictured)* – by day and dine on fresh, locally sourced produce by night.

As an exclusive part of the Halliday Barnbougle Cup weekend, enjoy a food and wine masterclass with Halliday Tasting Team member Dave Brookes. The dinner, perched atop a coastal dune in Barnbougle's Lost Farm Restaurant, will be four amazing courses, paired with highly rated wines.

The Halliday Barnbougle Cup welcomes players of any ability and all guests will have the opportunity to experience what Barnbougle has to offer, staying on site at Lost Farm Lodge.

Packages include two nights' accommodation, two rounds of golf, breakfast and lunch over the weekend, unique food and wine experiences and a Halliday welcome pack.

For more information about the event, visit the website www.winecompanion.com.au or email golf@winecompanion.com.au ▶

PHOTO: BRENDAN JAMES

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*Our new 6th hole - opened Feb 23

Devilbend Golf Club

The Devilbend Golf Club is now established itself as one of the must visit golf courses on the Mornington Peninsula. Extensive course works over the past 5 years has lifted the club to great heights and is now considered to be one of the best public access courses on the Peninsula.

Complete with a full practise facility including a driving range it is great way to warm up prior to either 18 or 9 holes of golf. Following golf our clubhouse is open for refreshments or a bite to eat and you can enjoy the magnificent view from our deck overlooking the 18th and 9th greens.

Situated just off the Peninsula link freeway and only minutes from Mornington it is an easy 50-minute drive from the Melbourne CBD. Social groups are more than welcome to book and our timesheets are open for 2024. Our fleet of 25 brand new carts are also available for hire.

For more information or to book a round of golf please visit our website **www.devilbendgolf.com.au** or phone our Pro Shop on **59788470** or email **manager@devilbendgolf.com.au**

RECOMMENDED ROUND

ALBANY GOLF CLUB

One of Australia's true links golf courses – Western Australia's acclaimed Albany Golf Club – celebrates its 125th anniversary this year.

The course was originally laid out in 1898 as a nine-holer across the wonderful rolling sand dunes that lie between King George Sound and Lake Seppings, about five hours' drive south east of Perth.

The Albany links has evolved into an 18-hole gem that today ranks in the Top-100 Public Access Courses in Australia. The course climbed an incredible 24 places to be ranked No.49 in the latest listing published by *Golf Australia magazine*. It is the highest ranking ever bestowed on the seaside course.

"Albany is pure old school links golf. The next time I go I'm going to pack the hickories to take the experience to the next level," Top-100 judge Lucas Andrews said.

And fellow judge Scott Matthews added: "The moment you walk off the 18th green you will want to dart back to the 1st tee and do it all again."

An 18-hole round at Albany is just $50 for visitors, making it one of the best value green fees in the country.

For those planning to make the journey to Albany, the club has play and stay deals with Ace Accommodation Albany (www.aceaccommodationalbany.com.au) and Pelicans Albany Middleton Beach (www.pelicansalbany.com). Guests staying with either accommodation provider get a 20 percent green fee discount.

For more information about the course, visit www.albanygolfclub.com.au

PHOTO: BRENDAN JAMES

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HOLIDAY AT HOME

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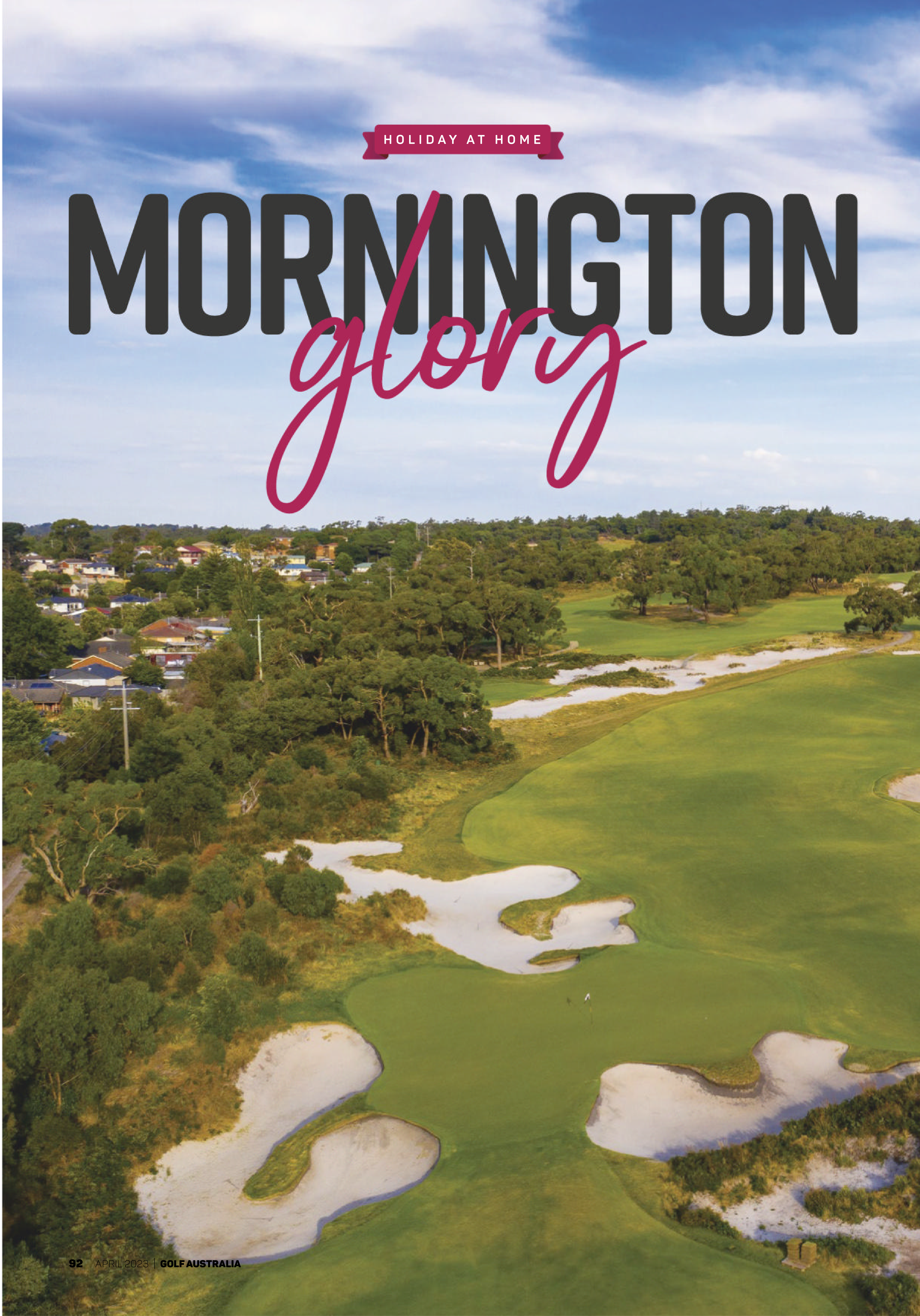


Australia is blessed with a host of world-class golfing destinations, and Victoria's Mornington Peninsula ranks among our finest where great golf, food, wine and accommodation are par for the course.

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY **BRENDAN JAMES**

There's nowhere else in the golfing world quite like it.

Lying just south of the internationally renowned Melbourne Sandbelt, Victoria's Mornington Peninsula has made a global name for itself as a 'must-visit' golfing destination boasting a plethora of world class courses.

Then, there are the off-course attractions. Foodies will love the equally world-class wineries (celebrated for their chardonnay and pinot noir in particular) and great restaurants where you can indulge in local epicurean delights. It's also the perfect place to switch off by soaking in steamy hot springs, laze on a beach or relax in a luxury hotel.

But if you're reading this it is the golf that comes first, and every other attraction is the icing on the cake.

The Mornington Peninsula boasts the greatest concentration of Top-100 ranked courses in Australia. Of the 20 courses featured over the following pages, 16 of them are ranked in *Golf Australia magazine's* Top-100 Courses in the country, while the remaining courses are highly regarded public access layouts.

By all means, enjoy the food, the wine and the sights, but we're sure the golfing delights of the Mornington Peninsula will have you enthused for a return.

PENINSULA KINGSWOOD CGC

Lying at the northern gateway to the Mornington Peninsula, and on the southern fringe of the Melbourne Sandbelt, the Peninsula Kingswood Country Golf Club is ▶

PENINSULA KINGSWOOD CGC – NORTH COURSE

> “MORNINGTON CONTINUES TO IMPRESS … THE 19TH HOLE ADDITION IS ONE OF THE MOST VISUALLY SPECTACULAR HOLES ON THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA.”
>
> **– TOP-100 RANKING JUDGE, JAMES WALSH.**

home to one of Australia’s most exciting 36-hole complexes.

While the original North and South were highly acclaimed for years, the club undertook a multi-million-dollar course redevelopment, which was completed and officially opened for play in 2019. It has since thrust the spectacular redesign onto the world stage.

The merger of Peninsula and Melbourne’s Kingswood Golf Club in 2013 led to the new club commissioning the then Ogilvy, Clayton, Cocking and Mead (OCCM) design firm to totally revamp the North and South Courses, with Mike Cocking taking responsibility for much of the epic project that ultimately created two new courses.

Difficulty should never be used in assessing the quality of a golf course, and when a club focuses on making their course harder, it usually spells the end for hole width and, ultimately, strategy. With the Peninsula Kingswood club giving the design team free reign to create the best holes they could, width and strategy were re-introduced throughout the property. Much of the width, offering multiple playing lines on most holes, was created by clearing non-indigenous vegetation, which unveiled the natural heathland of the area and is one of the unforgettable elements of a round here.

Then there are the special extras. The Pure Distinction bentgrass putting surfaces are quick, firm and smooth … a familiar trait throughout the Sandbelt. The flash bunkering is spectacular, while the beautifully trimmed short grass areas ‘connecting’ green complexes with the next tee adds to the splendour of the design.

Peninsula Kingswood is a private member’s club, but interstate visitors can apply for a tee time. There is also luxury accommodation on-site.

MORNINGTON GC

Mornington is one of the oldest on the peninsula having been established nearly 120 years ago and has been on its current site overlooking Port Phillip Bay since 1946.

The club entrusted the job of designing the course to former gun amateur golfer, Gus Jackson, and the first nine holes officially opened for play four years after the site was chosen.

Seven decades on, the course continues to evolve and has found success and popularity in recent years on the back of impressive redesign work and wonderfully manicured playing surfaces. The course debuted at No.84 in *Golf Australia magazine’s* Top-100 Public Access Courses in 2019. Two years later, it stormed up the same list to No.64, making it one of the most improved layouts in the country. This year, its climb continued into the top half of the ranking to No.47.

“Mornington continues to impress. The closing holes of both nines have been improved with the construction of new green complexes, while the 19th hole addition is one of the most visually spectacular holes on the Mornington Peninsula,” noted Top-100 judge, James Walsh.

The construction of the 19th hole, which is perched near the cliff tops on the edge of Port Phillip Bay, has been a masterstroke by the

▶

DEVILBEND GC

MORNINGTON GC

MORNINGTON
glory

BAY VIEWS GOLF COURSE

club. It has allowed them to take individual holes out of play for extended periods for redevelopment work but still provide a memorable and challenging hole as a stand-in.

Contour Golf Design architect Ben Davey in collaboration with Cape Wickham Links co-designer Darius Oliver are the minds behind the redesign, which has already seen considerable improvements made.

The latest hole to be remodelled is the par-4 6th, which is now a wonderful semi-blind two-shotter featuring high and low road playing lines on the wide, undulating fairway. The high road has its risks but a better view of the elevated green, while the low road has little risk from the tee, but an obscured view and longer shot into the putting surface. It's a terrific hole that keeps Mornington's improvement curve heading in the right direction, and ensures more golfers visiting the Peninsula will be calling into Mornington for a game.

> "THE ACCLAIMED VERN MORCOM CREATED THE ORIGINAL BAY VIEWS LAYOUT IN THE 1950S ... THERE ARE PLENTY OF GOOD HOLES TO PIQUE YOUR INTEREST INCLUDING ITS COLLECTION OF DIVERSE PAR-3s."

DEVILBEND GC

Devilbend Golf Club is one of the lesser-known Mornington Peninsula clubs, especially to those living outside Victoria, but is certainly worth a visit.

Opened for play in 1975, the layout was designed and constructed by Eric Horne, who decades earlier had worked alongside Sam Berriman, the acclaimed long-time curator and builder of Huntingdale and a host of other Victorian courses.

While the land at Devilbend was not ideal for golf – combining several steep hills with swampy lowlands – Horne was still able to create a good, challenging course that has gradually been improved bit-by-bit during the past four decades. During that time all the greens have been reconstructed, the fairways converted to Santa Ana couch and bunkers added.

While the hills at Devilbend provide the platform for some attractive holes, the standout hole plays across a slope and adds to the challenge of hitting an accurate approach. The 408-metre par-4 12th is rated the hardest hole on the course for good reason. Played from an elevated tee, your drive needs to find the right half (or high side) of the fairway to avoid a lake to the left. With the ball sitting above your feet (for right-handers) you need to hit a straight second to keep your ball out of the bunkers that surround the green and to leave a straightforward approach up the length of the angled green.

BAY VIEWS GOLF COURSE

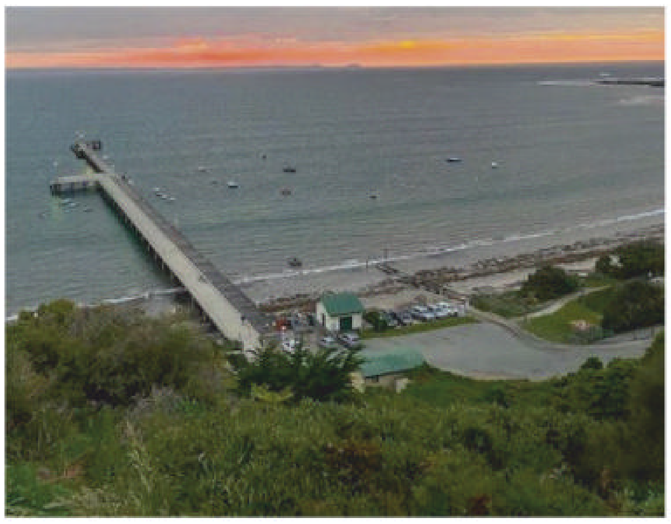
Bay Views is another peninsula layout, like Devilbend, that lies across dramatically undulating terrain. In fact, of all the courses featured here, Bay Views offers some of the best elevated regional and bay views. Hence the name.

Situated on steep sloping land at Arthur's Seat, Bay Views rises above the surrounding residential areas providing golfers with Port Phillip Bay vistas all the way to Sorrento.

The acclaimed Vern Morcom created the original Bay Views layout in the 1950s and, despite it not being on ideal golfing land, there are plenty of good holes to pique your interest including its collection of diverse par-3s.

From the challenges presented by the 180-metre downhill 11th, with its dramatically contoured putting surface, to the short, well- ▶

Flinders Golf Club



Flinders Golf Club is a premier golfing destination on the Mornington Peninsula with a 120 year history. Offering spectacular ocean views from every hole, classic coastal links, the famous cliff top Coffin Hole is a true golfing highlight. The course is perched high on the cliff tops with views across Western Port to Phillip Island and the rugged Bass Strait coastline provide a stunning panorama.

The course and clubhouse are open to members and social golfers 7 days a week and available for corporate & social golf days, functions, and events.

For all Membership, Golf, or Event enquiries please contact the club directly.

Bass Street Flinders VIC 3929 | Golf: **(03) 5989 0312** | Club: **(03) 5989 0583**
admin@flindersgolfclub.com.au | **www.flindersgolfclub.com.au**

bunkered 15th and 17th (123 and 135 metres respectively) holes, which hint at Melbourne Sandbelt origins in their design.

Bay Views' presentation has improved markedly since Golf Services Management took over the running of the course in 2014. This investment saw the layout climb to within just a few points of cracking a spot in the 2023 ranking of the Top-100 Public Access Courses in Australia.

ROSEBUD CC

Rosebud is one of the peninsula's original clubs and is enjoying a resurgence in popularity after hosting the PGA Tour of Australasia's TPS Victoria event for the past three years.

The TPS tournament is played on a Composite layout of the club's North and South Courses, both of which have been significantly redeveloped in recent years, with designers Ogilvy, Cocking and Mead (OCM) bringing in changes that really impressed this magazine's Top-100 Public Access Course ranking judges.

"The design changes of both Rosebud courses have been enhanced further by the great work undertaken by Ian Todd, the former long-time course superintendent at Victoria Golf Club, and his team," ranking judge Nathan Burgess said of Rosebud after its North and South Courses grabbed No.27 and No.56 respectively in the list published earlier this year.

Fellow judge Phil Nicholls added: "The South Course is much improved, and I would recommend playing this fine layout in the morning, grabbing a bite of lunch and heading out on the North Course in the afternoon."

With rippling fairways, a handful of semi-blind tee shots, expansive bunkering, wider playing lines and exciting green complexes throughout the two courses, it's no wonder Rosebud is gaining wide acclaim.

SORRENTO GC

Many of Melbourne's well-to-do keep membership at Sorrento Golf Club, and it's also a popular second club for members of Sandbelt clubs. Not only is Sorrento a terrific place to dine, shop and wander around, it's home to a gem of a golf course tucked away behind town with a beautiful country charm to it.

Founded in 1907 (originally as Sorrento and Portsea GC, which is interesting given recent speculation of a merger between the two), Sorrento is laid out on rolling land dotted with pine trees and low scrub. The course is short by modern standards yet is a tight test characterised by its quintet of fantastic short holes, while the bunkering is also a standout feature. As is the conditioning, which might just be so good as to put Sorrento among the best presented layouts in the nation.

Sorrento is a private club, but visitors can enquire about available tee times Monday, Tuesday afternoon and Thursday.

PORTSEA GC

Portsea Golf Club used to be regarded as one of the best-kept golfing secrets on the Mornington Peninsula.

Not anymore though. Today, a modern $12 million clubhouse with 24 four-and-a-half-star hotel rooms – offering panoramic views over the course and beyond, gives Portsea a resort feel despite remaining a private golf club.

It is a visually striking layout near the tip of the peninsula bordering the Point Nepean National Park. Classically designed, Portsea has evolved from a nine-hole track created by Scottish professional Jock Young in 1926 to a par-71 that was ranked No.37 in Australia by this magazine in 2022.

Commonwealth Golf Club's long-time secretary Sloan Morpeth created 18 new holes for the club in 1965, which remained unchanged for more than three decades when Michael Clayton was commissioned to remodel the layout. Holes were lengthened, bunkers re-shaped and large tracts of thick ti-tree removed to enhance the view from many of the tees. The design firm of Ogilvy, Cocking and Mead (OGM) was recently appointed course consultants to the club to oversee further enhancements to the course.

Portsea's sometimes dramatic topography and the occasionally strong breezes offset the ▶

THE DUNES GOLF LINKS

MORNINGTON glory

MOONAH LINKS – OPEN COURSE

fact it is not long by modern standards. That said, it's no soft touch.

Built among rolling sand dunes and protected by thick native coastal shrubbery and deep bunkers, Portsea offers several approaches up steep ravines as well as a handful of blind tee shots throughout the journey.

Take the short but genuinely tough par-4 10th hole. At 256 metres from the back pegs, there is certainly a temptation to have a crack at the green with the driver. But anything less than perfect will probably finish in the massive scheme of bunkers, surrounded by dense scrub, to be found on the low left side of the fairway.

THE DUNES GL

This Tony Cashmore-designed gem at Rye has been a favourite stop for golfers visiting the Mornington Peninsula more than. 25 years now.

The course, opened for play in 1997, was the first of a generation of links courses to be built in Australia over the next decade, including Links Kennedy Bay in WA, the Barnbougle courses in Tasmania as well as neighbouring layouts like those found at The National and Moonah Links.

The layout rocks and rolls across exposed, undulating, sandy terrain and is framed by craggy, rustic bunkers. It has its quirks, but those quirks make Cashmore's creation so memorable.

But at its heart is 18 holes easily enjoyed and playable for casual golfers, aspiring to be better golfers and those that have already mastered the ability to get the ball in the middle of the clubface.

It is very much a second shot course where the inviting wide fairways tempt you out of your comfort zone and question your ability to leave your ball in the best possible location for your next shot.

One of the many highlights of a round here is playing the stunning 179-metre 17th – a 'Redan' style par-3 described by Tom Watson as "an exquisite golf hole". The pin position dictates whether a high fade or a curling draw is the preferred play and any shot shaped correctly has every chance of catching the contours of the green and feeding close to the flag.

MOONAH LINKS

Back in 1998, the then named Australian Golf Union (AGU) had a masterplan to create two championship courses, a state-of-the-art teaching and practice facility as well as a resort and residential development in the heart of the Mornington Peninsula.

It was the birth of Moonah Links and it became known as the 'Home of Australian Golf'. Millionaire businessman Paddy Handbury owned the property and oversaw the completion of the Open Course.

Designed specifically to host the Australian Open on a regular basis, the Peter Thomson, Mike Wolveridge and Ross Perrett-designed par-72 opened for play in 2001. The layout was routed over, through and around rolling sand dunes that are a real feature of this Cups region of the peninsula.

For the average golfer, the Open Course provides a stiff, but fair, challenge. Indeed, at 6,810 metres from the championship markers it is one of the longest courses in the country. The peninsula is prone to being buffeted by strong winds and the Open Course really bares its teeth on such days. But the strength of the challenge here is the enjoyable aspect of any round on the Open Course.

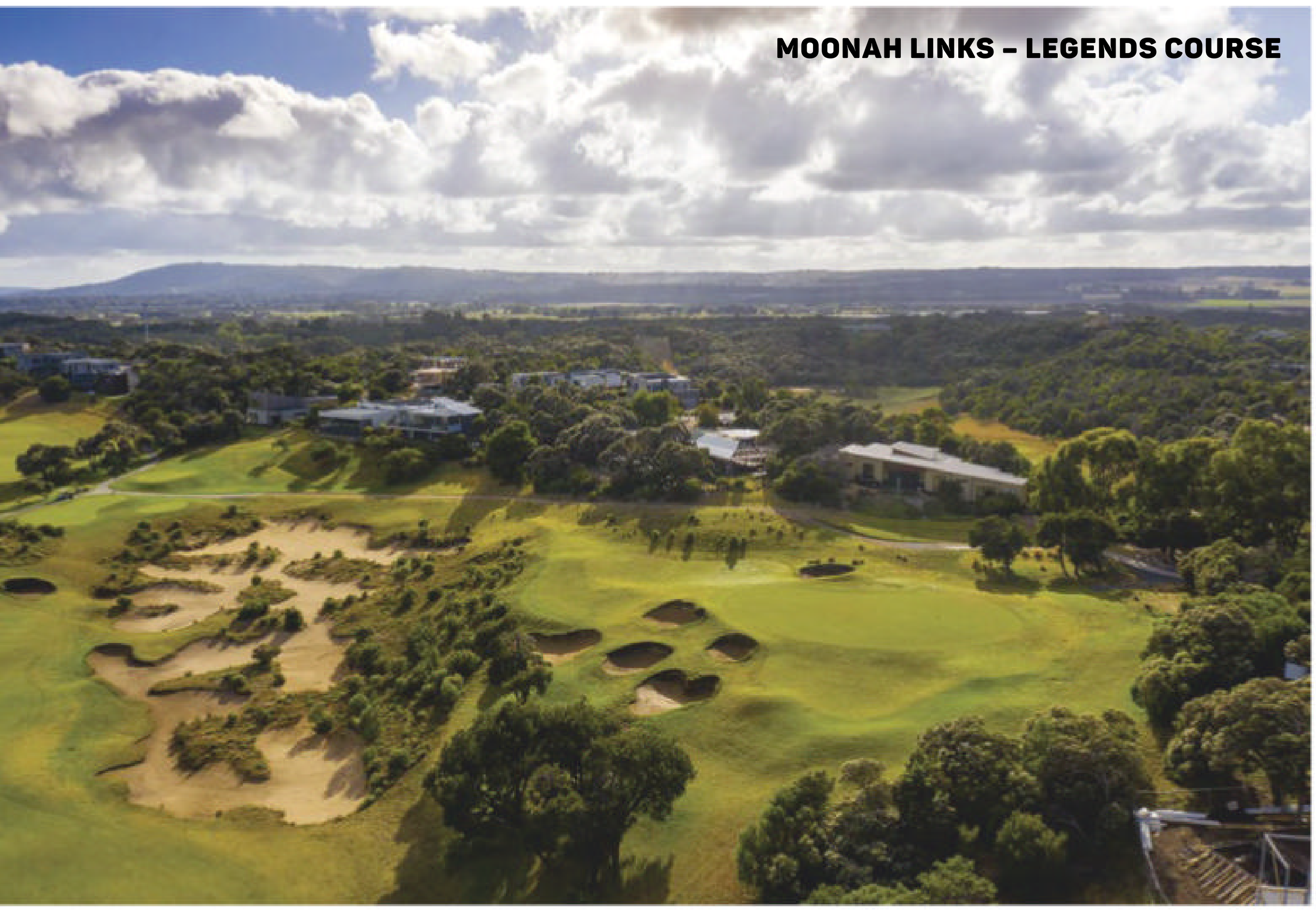
Some call it a "beast". Thomson referred to his creation as a "leviathan". Either way, you know if you can play to your handicap here you have indeed played well.

Perhaps the lasting impression the Open Course will leave is of the par-5 18th hole, which stretches to 582 metres from the plates and features no less than 11 bunkers scattered between tee and green. The rolling nature of the fairway means many of these bunkers are obscured from view, while the catchment area surrounding these sandy pits is wide and penal.

The Legends Course may have been the second course opened at Moonah Links but today it is generally ranked slightly higher than the neighbouring Open Course. Legends opens with a series of holes that rise and fall through valleys and in between long and dense stretches of ancient Moonah trees.

The course then takes on a new complexion as the Moonah trees thin out and wild, rugged bunkering, high sand dunes alongside gently rolling fairways give rise to a links-style course.

Very little earth was moved in the creation of the Legends course, which gives the impression it has been in the ground here for more than a few decades. Perrett did a wonderful job in routing the course to follow the pitch and roll of the land, sticking to the low ground wherever possible, while the aforementioned bunkering is not only intimidating but it adds to the visual ▶



MOONAH LINKS – LEGENDS COURSE

MOONAH LINKS
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VISITORS WELCOME

MOONAH LINKS

Moonah Links is arguably one of the most comprehensive golf resorts in Victoria. Just 90 minutes from Melbourne on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, Moonah Links is situated in the heart of the Cups Country, a region renowned for golf and drawing favourable comparisons to the Monterey Coast in California.

With the beautiful Mornington Peninsula being a source of inspiration in the creation of Moonah Links, the resort was designed to compliment, rather than dominate the beauty of this landscape. Peter Thomson used the ancient, undulating dunes and natural contours of this land to shape and design the now famous Open Course, which played host to the Australian Open Golf Championship in 2003 and 2005. The Moonah Classic in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2020. And the Victoria PGA Championship in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Measuring 6783 metres, the Open Course is a natural stadium layout with wide undulating fairways of pure couch grass, punctuated with pot bunkers and leading onto large multi-tiered greens, making this course a true test for all levels of golfer.

If one Championship Course isn't enough, we also have the Legends. The Legends Course stands as a tribute to past champions who have contributed to the rich history of Australian Golf. In contrast to The Open Course, which was purpose built to challenge the modern champion, the Legends Course is a more friendly golfing experience for players of all ages and abilities. At 6,320 metres, the course is a loop of 18 holes that generally follow the valleys through a variety of landscapes ranging from ancient Moonah Woodlands to open links land. The fairways are generous and the putting surfaces gentle, but the bunkering style is bold and wild in appearance.

Golfers are in luck with the sandy soil of the Mornington Peninsula rewarding us with year-round playability!

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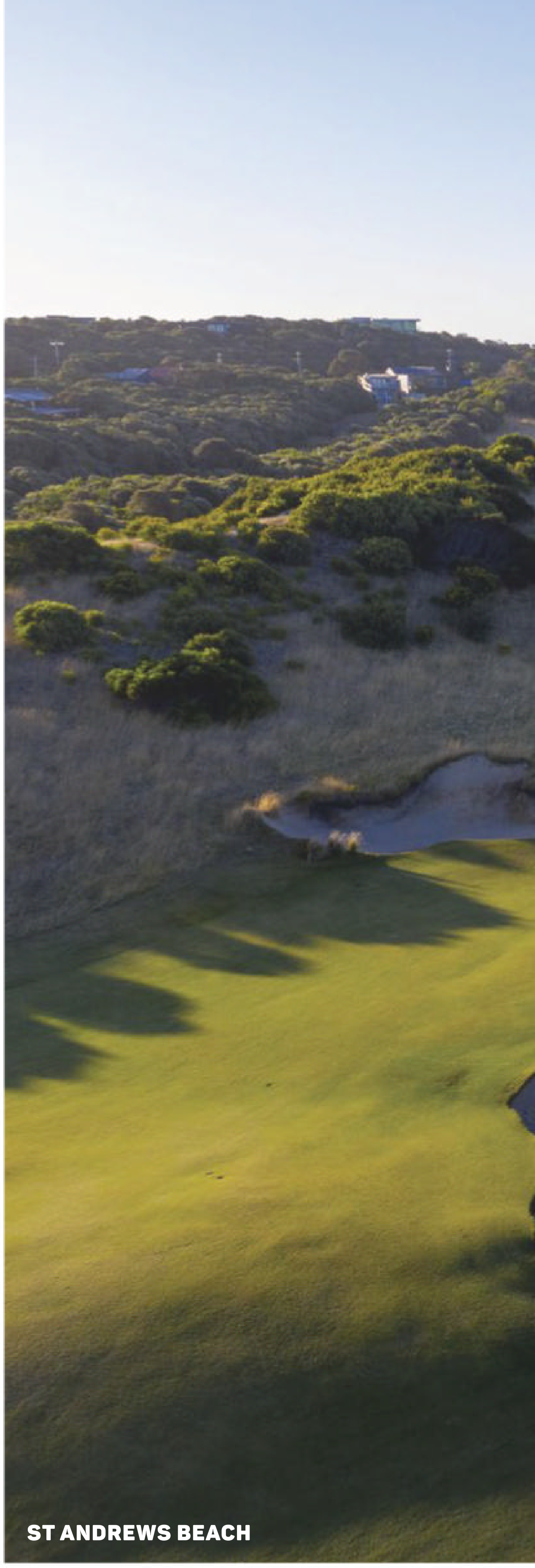
EAGLE RIDGE

EAGLE RIDGE



ST ANDREWS BEACH

appeal of the layout.

EAGLE RIDGE

All of the courses that have been added to the Mornington Peninsula landscape during the past 30 years can be found within 10 minutes' drive of each other in what has become the famed 'Cups' area.

Lying right in the heart of this area is the much under-rated Eagle Ridge course, which was extensively redesigned in 1999 by Pacific Coast Design course architect, Phil Ryan. In 2007, all 14 fairways were converted to Santa Ana couch, while the greens were changed to Penncross bentgrass. The grass conversion has been a resounding success and, 15 years on, the playing surfaces are excellent. In fact, the turf quality at Eagle Ridge would be the envy of any big private city club.

Eagle Ridge is definitely a fun alternative to the neighbouring links layouts. Trouble lurks on most holes, with well-bunkered greens and fairways common throughout.

The bunkering of this par-72 is plentiful and can be visually intimidating, especially if you find yourself in the sand with more than a wedge required to reach the green. Ryan's sandy hazards are a mix of small deep pots and expansive stretches of irregular shapes. The downhill par-3 8th hole, for example, features a pot bunker in front of the tee, while a 60-metre sprawl of sand lies just beyond. A further six bunkers can be found around the edge of the large green.

Eagle Ridge's penal bunkering is no more evident than when you head down the final stretch to the clubhouse. The 522-metre par-5 18th is a great closer that calls for length and accuracy as well as good strategy. A steep hill descending to the fairway may assist the longer drive but that's all the help any player gets here. Large bunkers hug the edges of the fairway for most of the remaining 200-plus metres to the green. The green is massive and almost entirely surrounded by a picturesque lake, with more than two-thirds of the green's fringe sloping steeply down to a watery grave.

If you make a mess of the final hole, you can always stick around for a few beverages and some live music in the Peninsula beer garden.

ST ANDREWS BEACH

Designer Tom Doak's second Australian design behind Barnbougle Dunes promised to be something special when it opened for play in 2005.

Doak created a course with plenty of

space, making it very playable and enjoyable for all golfers.

For the better player the key is in the playing lines from the tees and the angles those lines subsequently leave into the greens. Some holes are wide open and exposed; others funnel between dunes or between stands of untouched vegetation. The bunkering is wild and rugged, while the green complexes will gather or repel a bouncing approach shot depending on the line of attack.

"The land at St Andrews Beach was so good for designing a golf course that it became difficult to decide which holes we couldn't build," Tom Doak said in an interview with *Golf Australia magazine*. "There are natural golf holes laid out there of all shapes and sizes.

"In some cases, we just had to find the right spot to put a green, locate the nearest high point near that green to put the next tee and the following hole would present itself.

"I can't help but feel that Alister Mackenzie would be mad that he never got the chance to design a course on land this good."

Doak doesn't design his courses with an end length, or par number, in mind. He lets the terrain dictate how the course will flow.

For example, at St Andrews Beach he created some superb short par-4s. While the 279-metre 2nd earns considerable acclaim, I lean to the slightly shorter 14th as an even better hole. The tiny green lies at the end of a wide, split level fairway, surrounded on three sides by dunes. The right side of the putting surface features a steep drop off, which can repel a mis-hit nearly 15 metres down a hill into high, wispy rough. This is a wonderful hole that can be played three or four different ways and all result in the same score.

THE NATIONAL GC

The National Golf Club is the biggest and most impressive golf destination on the Mornington Peninsula.

In fact, it is the biggest golf club in the Southern Hemisphere with three courses – the Old, Gunnamatta and Moonah – surrounding its luxurious Cape Schanck clubhouse, while the most recent addition to The National portfolio is its Long Island course, which is the next-door neighbour to the previously mentioned Peninsula Kingswood CGC at Frankston at the northern gateway to the region. All four courses are ranked in the country's Top-50 by *Golf Australia magazine*.

The National opened in 1987 with the ▶

original Robert Trent Jones Jnr layout, now known as the Old course, before expanding in 2000 with two more layouts built on the western side of the current clubhouse. The Moonah course, created by Greg Norman and Bob Harrison, and the Tom Doak-crafted Gunnamatta layout that replaced the Peter Thomson, Mike Wolveridge and Ross Perrett-designed Ocean Course a few years ago.

By far the most famous hole on the Old Course is the par-3 7th, which traverses a ravine to a green with two distinct halves separated by a large spine. The 7th sits on a part of the property affording the best views of Bass Strait and often plays into the wind, meaning the 139 metres can still require a long iron to find the target.

The Moonah course is so named for the gnarled, weathered trees of the same name dotted across the layout. There are unique holes but no bad ones as each shot has you thinking and trying to navigate a path to the green that avoids the wind, the deep, natural bunkers and the thick rough flanking most fairways.

Doak's adjoining Gunnamatta Course is closer to the sea than the Moonah layout but sits on less dramatic terrain. This gave Doak some freedom to craft some really cool holes like the short but dramatic par-4 2nd, the par-4 8th with its boomerang-shaped green and the long par-3 11th hole, which was inspired by the design of the 'Calamity' hole at Royal Portrush in Northern Ireland.

The National is a private golf club but interstate visitors can request a tee time via the club's website. Victorian residents must be invited and play with a club member.

RACV CAPE SCHANCK RESORT

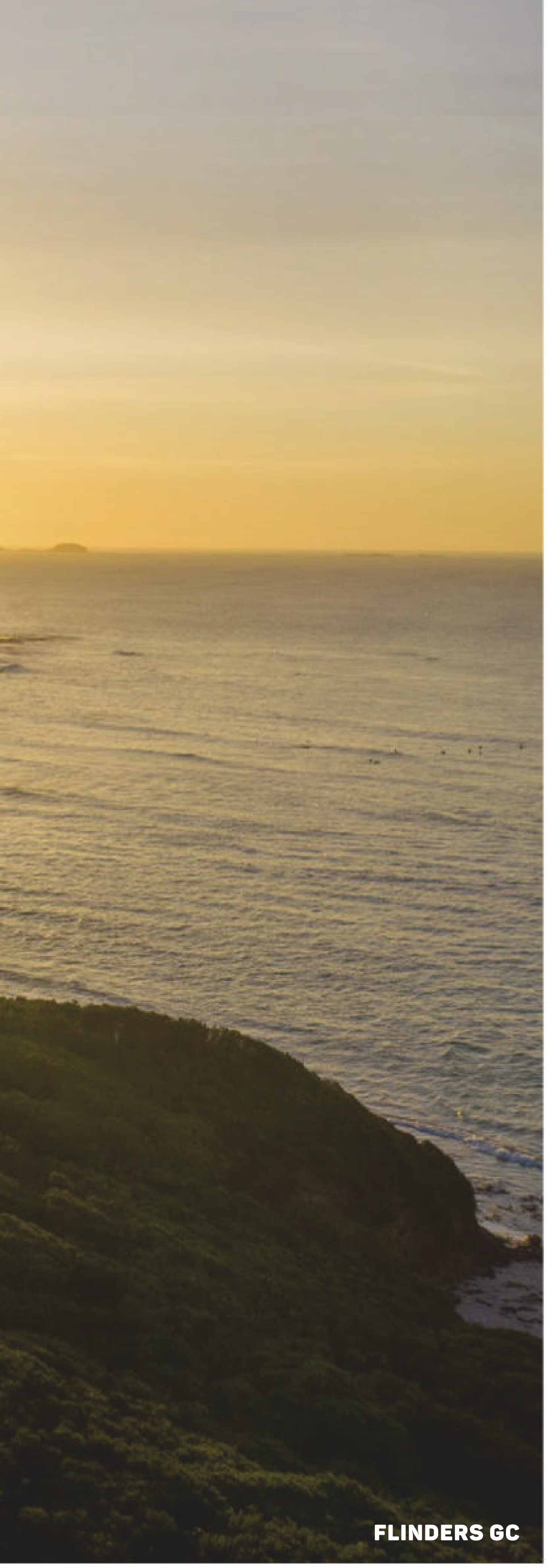
Almost a decade before the Mornington Peninsula golf course building boom began in the late '90s, famous American designer Robert Trent Jones Jnr left his golfing imprint on the landscape.

Of course, he created the Old Course for The National GC and, next door, he designed a public access course across similarly dramatic ground.

"It is an undulating, emerald oasis carved out of giant sand dunes and Ti-tree and will take artful playing," Jones said of his Cape Schanck design. "It is built on a high plateau of beautiful links land. The Cape course is not long. It is designed for skilful players who have to use a great deal of finesse. It is designed to be a fun yet challenging and intricate course."

The fairways rise and fall violently and quickly as they cut through the Ti-tree and ancient Moonah trees. It's hard to believe this land could be used for anything but golf.

Jones uses bunkering, the lie of the land and


FLINDERS GC

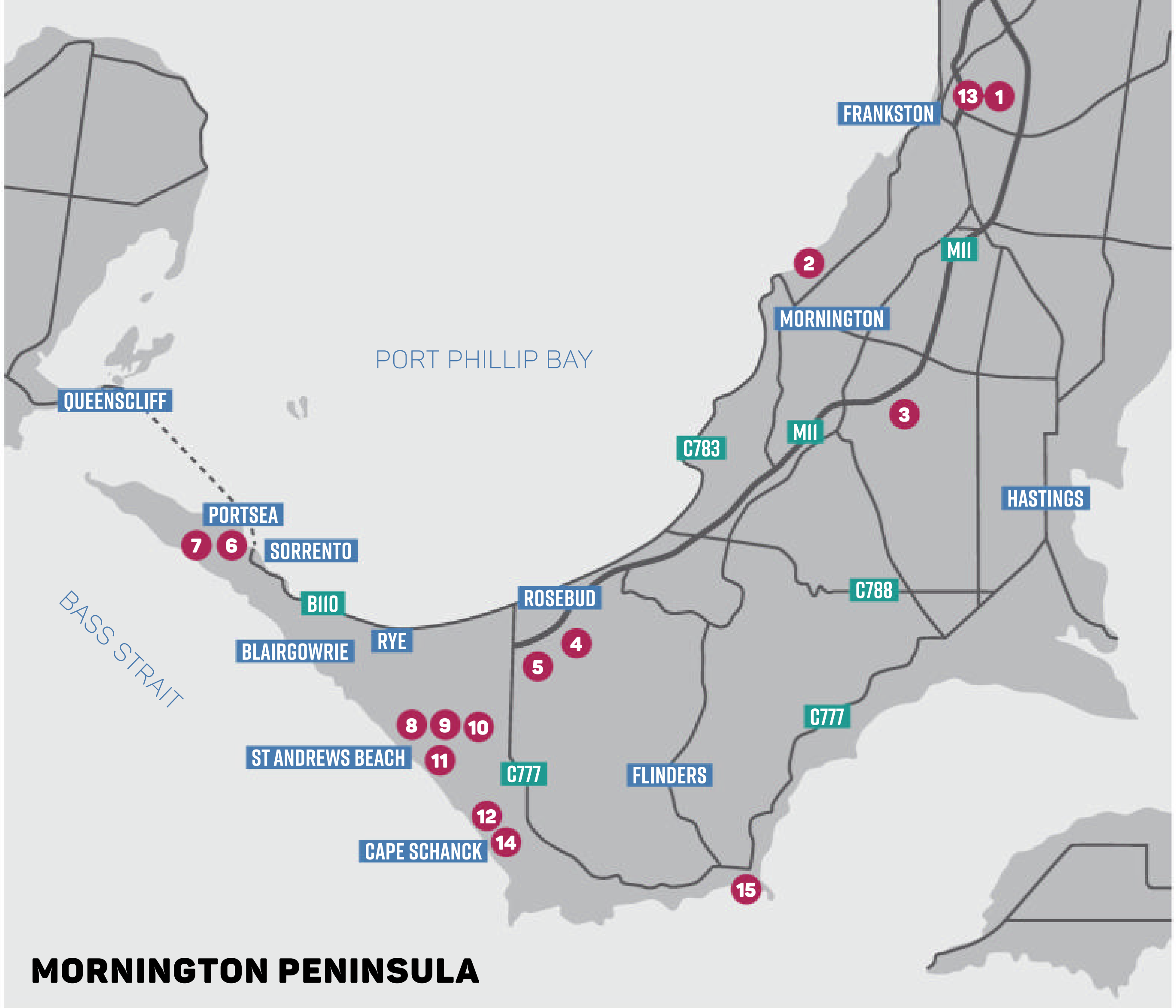
the natural vegetation to create a test. Only once does he use water to make the golfer second-guess his ability to successfully hit the green.

Although Jones didn't overdo the bunkering, there are still more than 70 of them between the 1st tee and 18th green. Some are small and seemingly innocuous while others are big enough to warrant a camel escort. All are unique in shape and strategically positioned to make you think with every shot you take from the tee and fairway.

FLINDERS GC

Nestled on the cliffs at the entrance to Victoria's Westernport Bay, Flinders Golf Club would never been considered in the same category of long and demanding that is a trait of most of its neighbours lying to the west in the heart of the peninsula.

But Flinders offers plenty of challenges ▶



MORNINGTON PENINSULA

WHERE TO PLAY

1.PENINSULA KINGSWOOD CGC
Green fees: Upon application.
www.peninsulakingswood.com.au

2. MORNINGTON GC
Green fees: $65 (18 holes, weekdays to May 31, 2023); $80 (weekends); $40 (weekdays from June 1), $60 (weekends).
www.morningtongolf.com.au

3. DEVILBEND GC
Green fees: $45 (18 holes, weekdays); $65 (Saturday); $55 (Sunday).
www.devilbendgolf.com.au

4. BAY VIEWS
Green fees: $48 (18 holes); $45 (booked online via website).
www.bayviewsgolf.com.au

5. ROSEBUD CC
Green fees: $85 (18 holes, weekdays); $95 (weekends). $110 (18 holes peak season).
www.rosebudcountryclub.com.au

6. SORRENTO GC
Green fees: Upon application. Limited tee times, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.
www.sorrentogolf.com.au

7. PORTSEA GC
Green fees: $100 (18 holes, weekdays); $110 (Sunday & public holidays).
www.portseagolf.com.au

8. THE DUNES GL
Green fees: $87 (18 holes, weekdays); $105 (weekends & public holidays).
www.thedunes.com.au

9. MOONAH LINKS
Green fees: $110 (18 holes, May to September), $220 (all day play); $125 (October to April), $250 (all day play).
www.moonahlinks.com.au

10. EAGLE RIDGE
Green fees: $60 avg. (18 holes, weekdays); $80 avg. (weekends).
www.eagleridge.com.au

11. ST ANDREWS BEACH
Green fees: $105 (18 holes).
www.standrewsbeachgolf.com.au

12. THE NATIONAL GC
Green fees: $280 (18 holes, interstate visitors, Monday, Tuesday & Thursday only), $420 (36 holes in one day); $140 (18 holes accompanied member's guest).
www.nationalgolf.com.au

13. THE NATIONAL GC – LONG ISLAND
Green fees: $180 (18 holes, interstate visitors, Monday, Tuesday & Thursday only), $270 (36 holes in one day); $100 (18 holes accompanied member's guest).
www.nationalgolf.com.au

14. RACV CAPE SCHANCK RESORT
Green fees: $90 (18 holes, weekdays, non-RACV members); $105 (18 holes, weekends, non-RACV members).
www.racv.com.au

15. FLINDERS GC
Green fees: $53 (18 holes, weekdays); $75 (weekends); $85 (peak season).
www.flindersgolfclub.com.au

MORNINGTON
glory

FLINDERS GC

and picturesque sights as it winds out to the edge of the cliffs, then uphill and inland before returning to the relatively flat, but enjoyable, finishing stretch of holes. It is an excursion that golfers have been enjoying for nearly 120 years.

Flinders is arguably the least known of the Mornington courses simply because it is a lone layout on the eastern side of the peninsula and certainly ranks as a hidden gem for those that have not travelled extensively throughout the region.

Five -time Open Champion Peter Thomson once wrote Flinders is a unique coastal course that could not be labelled a links "neither is it woodland or marsh," he wrote, "that is perched high on the cliff top, making it a distant cousin of Pebble Beach and a relative of Muirfield."

"Flinders is friendly yet full of surprises and intrigue," he concluded.

Flinders stretches to 5,277 metres from the tips and is a par 69. But these numbers mean very little in this part of the world where Mother Nature plays such a significant hand in the difficulty of a round. In fact, Thomson honed his wind-beating skills here prior to each of his Open victories.

Set across gentle sand hills above Bass Strait, Flinders has evolved over more than a century of play but some of the most significant changes to the layout came back in 1926 at the suggestion of the legendary course designer Dr Alister MacKenzie. The 'Good Doctor' during his visit to Australia had enough time to convince the committee at Flinders to make several changes to the course including the conversion of the then par-3 4th hole into a par-4.

MacKenzie proposed the slight dogleg left hole should run across the cliff tops and require players to negotiate two ravines en route to a steep sloping green. Today, the 263-metre two-shotter, known as 'The Coffin', is Flinders' most renowned hole and well worth every cent of the green fee.

There have been a raft of very good design improvements made to the layout in recent years, with a new green complex for the 16th hole being the latest big project for the course's greens staff.

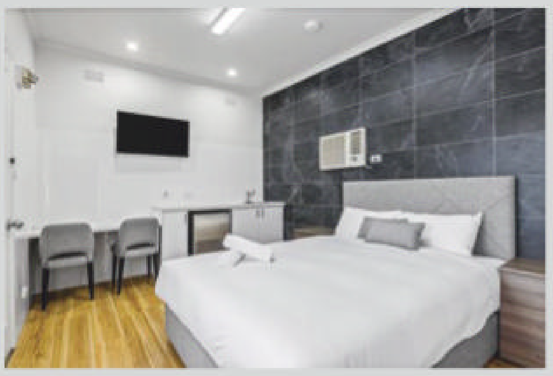
Rosebud
MOTEL
VACANCY
MOTEL
VACANCY

WHERE TO STAY

ROSEBUD MOTEL

Ideally located to fully explore all the golfing riches, and more, of the Mornington Peninsula, the Rosebud Motel *(pictured above)* has 12 ground floor rooms and a poolside cabin overlooking the solar heated pool.

The Rosebud Motel is surrounded by all the action located directly opposite the beautiful Port Phillip Bay, whether it is fishing, jet skiing, the Peninsula Hot Springs or golf.



Or you may just choose to relax around the pool or make use of the well-appointed BBQ area adjoining the 24-seat dining room equipped with plasma TV and billiard table.

The Rosebud Motel specialises in golf packages, either small or large groups, with an itinerary tailored to suit every individual golfers' needs. As well as providing a comfortable and relaxed stay, the motel will also organise all courses for you and provide you with a cooked or continental breakfast daily.

Golf packages start from $120 per person per night for six nights' accommodation and five rounds of golf (including breakfast), twin and double basis.

For more details or to book visit www.rosebudmotel.com.au

MERCURE PORTSEA

Mercure Portsea features 24 boutique-style rooms with each having a private balcony or terrace, ensuite and large LCD television. It's also only a short distance to Point Nepean, Portsea and Sorrento villages.

Stay and play packages start from $200 per person twin share (Sunday to Thursday) including one nights' accommodation, 18 holes at Portsea for two players and breakfast for two.

For more details and to book, visit www.portseagolf.com.au

PEPPERS MOONAH LINKS RESORT

Peppers Moonah Links Resort blends the Open and Legends Courses with luxury accommodation *(pictured below)*, a day spa and a la carte restaurant.

There are 70 deluxe rooms and suites, all with balconies or terraces overlooking the stunning golf courses or central putting green.

For more details or to book, www.moonahlinks.com.au or www.peppers.com.au/moonah

Welcome to

Rosebud MOTEL

Rosebud
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MOTEL

Family run and family owned, it just happens to be right in the middle of some of Australia's finest Sandbelt Golf courses. We offer packages for both small and large Golf groups. Rosebud motel has a lot to offer without breaking the bank account. Outdoor picnic area, under cover BBQ area, indoor common room with kitchen, dining and pool table and 30m from the beach.

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Flinders
Mornington
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Sorrento
St Andrews Beach
The Dunes
Moonah links
The National

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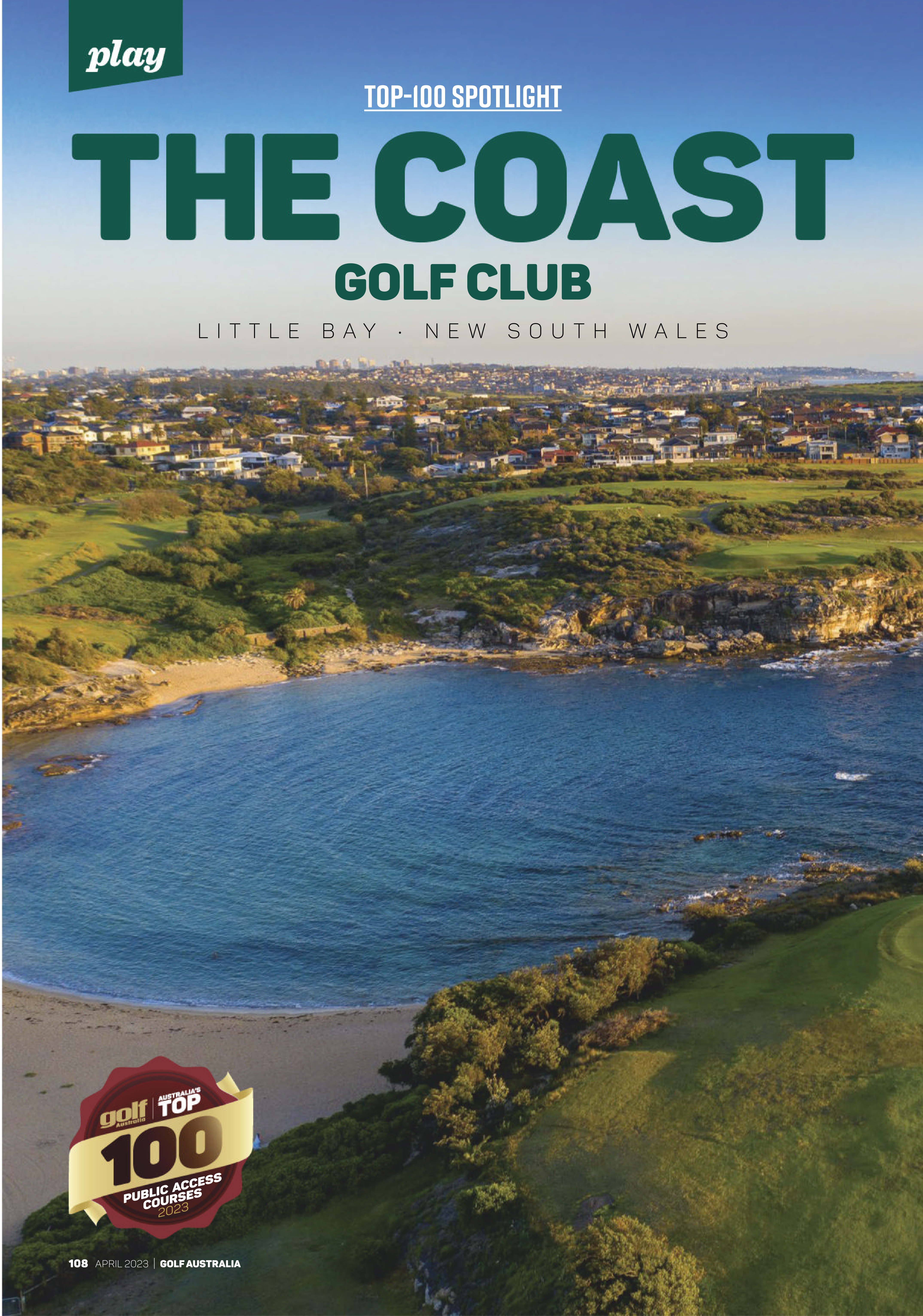
TOP-100 SPOTLIGHT

THE COAST

GOLF CLUB

LITTLE BAY · NEW SOUTH WALES



golf Australia AUSTRALIA'S TOP 100 PUBLIC ACCESS COURSES 2023

WORDS **JIMMY EMANUEL** PHOTOGRAPHY **BRENDAN JAMES**

There is something special about playing golf on the water's edge, alongside beach sand and at the mercy of mother nature.

It is where the game's origins lie in Scotland, on the grass covered sandy linksland that gave the natural undulations and interesting terrain to the likes of The Old Course at St Andrews, Turnberry and North Berwick.

In Australia, the use of land barely removed from the tides and waves has produced modern gems like the three courses on the Barnbougle property, as well as King Island's Cape Wickham and Ocean Dunes.

Although the greater Sydney area is often derided for its quality of courses in competition with the famed Melbourne Sandbelt, one thing the harbour city does have in its favour is oceanside golf. And much of it is open for all to play.

A pocket of courses situated in Sydney's eastern suburbs alongside the best layout in the city in NSW Golf Club encompasses Randwick, St Michael's and The Coast Golf Clubs, all of which showcase the variety and quality of the city's public golf played along the edge of the Pacific Ocean.

Where Randwick is short and quirky, St Michael's continues to grow in stature and reputation. So too does The Coast, with its sometimes cliff traversing 18 holes and high-quality conditioning seeing the Little Bay course ranked 54th in *Golf Australia magazine's* Top-100 Public Access Courses for 2023.

That ranking was an elevation by three places from two years prior, and for anyone who has paid a visit to the course, either for the first time or as a repeat guest, it is easy to understand how the course's reputation continues to rise. ▶

THE 3RD GREEN SITS PRECARIOUSLY ABOVE LITTLE BAY BEACH.

THERE'S LITTLE ROOM FOR ERROR ON THE LONG PAR-4 7TH HOLE.

THERE ARE TWO PLAYING LINES ON THE 18TH – AROUND OR OVER THE LAKE BETWEEN TEE AND GREEN.

THE COAST'S OCEANSIDE 4TH IS REGARDED AS ONE OF THE BEST PAR-3 HOLES IN SYDNEY.

> *"IT DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER THAN PLAYING ALONGSIDE THE CLIFFS WITH MILLION-DOLLAR OCEAN VIEWS EARLY AND LATE IN THE ROUND AT THE COAST."*
>
> ***– TOP-100 RANKING JUDGE, HAMISH WALKER.***

"Every time I visit The Coast I find some aspect of the course is better than it was before," Top-100 Public Access Courses ranking jude, Julian Allen, said. "The presentation of the layout, particularly the putting surfaces, is one area that has improved markedly in recent years."

The presentation has clearly been a focus for the thriving club of late, with former rugby league international and Coast member Luke Burgess telling this writer he doesn't believe he has seen it in better "nick" in all his time there.

Greens roll true, and quickly downhill, while the fairways are an outstanding surface to play from and increasingly offer a variety of options when approaching greens more in keeping with the links-like feel of the setting.

That setting and the seemingly always present wind, combined with the conditioning, would almost be enough for a course like The Coast to achieve praise and visitors from far and wide. Yet it is the design of the holes lending plenty of weight to its standing among the best public tracks in the country.

A gentle opening of a par-4 and par-5 played side-by-side allows golfers to get into their stride before the first eye catching hole arrives in the form of the par-5 3rd.

A tee shot with internal out-of-bounds

PRESENTED BY LAWN SOLUTIONS AUSTRALIA

left courtesy of the practice fairway is simple enough before an infinity green (think infinity pool) appears in full view as you make your way along the 465-metre journey from the back tee. Perched above Little Bay Beach, the 3rd green is of a style that will become familiar during a round at The Coast, with a relatively small amount of mown grass in a circular shape. Two bunkers front the putting surface, but make no mistake the danger here is long with an overcooked wedge approach following a laid up second shot leaving golfers reaching into the bag for a new ball and swimmers ducking for cover below.

Long is no good at the par-5, however the next hole is best played with an extra club than the stated distance might require, that's before you even factor in the wind of the day.

Measuring as much as 180 metres from the blue tees and 115 from the reds, the par-3 4th is without question the most memorable hole of the course, which was originally laid out by Jim Ferrier as a recreation area for staff and patients of the neighbouring Prince Henry Hospital and was updated by James Wilcher nearly a decade ago.

Although visually intimidating, the 4th is in fact playable for all golfers despite the direct line from tee to green covering a rocky inlet from the ocean from where golf balls do not return. Room to the right of the green leaves a good spot for the less daring, while the extra club from the tee can also remove the danger of the front left bunker.

"It doesn't get any better than playing alongside the cliffs with million-dollar ocean views early and late in the round at The Coast," Top-100 panellist Hamish Walker said. "The 180-metre 4th hole, demanding a tee shot over the rocky shoreline, is, in my opinion, one of the best par-3s in the country."

Views of the ocean and the high likelihood of lost balls continue at the par-5 next as golfers start to prepare for the hardest hole on the course that is one of the furthest from the water's edge.

At 403 metres, the par-4 7th is the hole most reworked by Wilcher, and even on the rare days of little to no wind at The Coast, it is no straight forward task.

It will be a lay-up from the tee for most ▶

THE PAR-4 17TH IS A BEAST, ESPECIALLY FROM THE TIPS SOME 380 METRES FROM THE GREEN.

players to avoid a small water hazard that cuts the fairway in half, and there isn't much room right or left of the mown portion either. A long iron or rescue leaving plenty of yardage to a green that curves around the brush covered bank of a water hazard right, while a bunker short left makes things even more difficult.

A mix of difficult holes with others offering birdies is the theme of the back nine at The Coast, which takes its most dramatic turn at the par-4 14th.

From all but the most forward tee, a drive carrying a gorge, and more often than not played into the wind, is required to reach the right-to-left sloping fairway. The left side of the fairway, although courting the danger of a lost ball to the brush or water below, is the best place to approach the raised green which also slopes from right-to-left. Walking away with a par here is always a good result, a statement that is true for much of the remaining holes on the journey back to the clubhouse.

The 16th plays much shorter than its stated 322-metre scorecard distance due to the severity of the downhill slope of the fairway giving well struck tee shots plenty of run before an approach shot over water to a generously-sized green, offering a rare birdie chance in the closing stages.

Birdies are also in the offering at the last for longer players, who can take plenty of distance off the hole by going directly over the water short right of the green rather than following the dogleg right fairway around the hazard. But once again, a conservative line with par in mind is presented for shorter hitters and less daring players with a good score going.

That sort of risk-reward golf is something The Coast has amplified in recent times through the work completed by Wilcher, which has been greatly enhanced with updated irrigation work completed across the course in 2019.

Even if you aren't blessed with the power to take on the bolder driving lines and longer par-3s, The Coast offers playability for all skill levels, while the enjoyment of playing the game across some of the best real estate in Sydney should help you forget any high numbers written on the scorecard.

FACT FILE

LOCATION: 1 Coast Hospital Rd, Little Bay, NSW, 2036
CONTACT: (02) 9311 7422
WEBSITE: www.coastgolf.com.au
DESIGNERS: Jim Ferrier (late 1930s) and James Wilcher (2007-ongoing).
PLAYING SURFACES: Kikuyu and couch (fairways); Bentgrass/poa annua (greens).
COURSE SUPERINTENDENT: Jordan Roach.
PGA PROFESSIONALS: Jason King (Director of Golf), Sebastian Howell.
GREEN FEES: $70 (weekend peak); $60 (weekend off peak); $50 (weekend twilight); $55 (midweek peak); $50 (midweek off peak); $45 (midweek twilight).
ACCOLADES: Ranked No.54 in *Golf Australia Magazine's* Top-100 Public Access Courses for 2023.

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RB TOUR X
1

MIZUNO RB TOUR GOLF BALLS

THOROUGH TESTING FOR PREMIUM PERFORMANCE

Mizuno have ushered in a deeper focus on its premium golf ball line in 2023 with its new RB Tour and RB Tour X models that have been specifically geared towards the next generation of Tour and elite golfers.

Research and Development (R&D) teams in Japan and America worked in concert to develop the new offerings that the brand calls "Our most tested Tour Performance balls ever".

Ninety-nine prototypes were put through the most detailed testing Mizuno have undertaken on a golf ball to eventually deliver the soft feeling golf balls that both offer a high launch, low spin driver flight combined with a flatter short iron and wedge trajectory.

"The ultimate difference with the new RB Tour has been the time spent working on the prototypes – three years of player, robot and greenside feedback across every possible performance attribute," Director of R&D for Mizuno in America, David Llewellyn, said. "Via parallel R&D teams – our original ball group in Japan, backed up by our unit in Atlanta US."

It is the new 'AXIALFLOW' dimples which create the varied and playability specific performance, with just 272 dimples part of an overall approach that even focused on appearance of the golf balls.

RB Tour delivers the lowest long game spin and softer feel, while the X model is firmer at impact and spins slightly more with driver.

"We purposefully slanted the performance of both RB Tour models towards our younger elite players," Mizuno's Chris Voshall said. "Both models launch high off the driver – one with low spin, the other lower. Yet both balls demonstrated a flatter flight from full wedge shots. A remarkable accomplishment from the aerodynamics team in Japan."

RRP: $84 (dozen)

www.mizunogolf.com

MIZUNO S23 WEDGES

SPIN AT THE CENTRE

Almost every player carries at least one speciality wedge in their bag these days, yet that doesn't mean it is one design for all as was the case in the past when Tour-style wedges were virtually the only option.

Cavity back wedges blending playability and forgiveness have become common place in the category, and Mizuno's new S23 offering falls right into that mould while still appealing to some Tour players, according to the company.

Grain Flow Forged in Japan for exceptional Mizuno feel, the new model takes on the look of a better player wedge at address that hides its game improvement qualities delivered by a toe weighted design achieved through a shorter hosel and heel side cavity.

This head design pushes the centre of gravity (CG) from the heel to the centre of the club to produce longer impact time, greater stability and more spin.

Spin was also a focus for the brand's R&D team with 'Quad Cut Milled' grooves cut into a boron infused carbon steel that is more durable for longer lasting spin, while 'HydroFlow Micro Grooves' ensure improved performance in wet weather.

"That check and spin you see from the pros isn't purely because of newer grooves – most of us don't have the consistency of strike to get that kind of action," Director of R&D for Mizuno in America, David Llewellyn, said. "For the vast majority, a centralised sweet spot is much easier to find and get that repetitive action."

Offered in White Satin Brush Chrome or Copper Cobalt finishes, the S23 wedges are available in lofts from 49° to 62°.

RRP: $339

www.mizunogolf.com ▶

52 09
S23
GF FORGED HD
1025 BORON
S23
56 10

FOOTJOY HYPERFLEX & HYPERFLEX CARBON

GO BEYOND TYPICAL PERFORMANCE

Golf shoes are far removed from the heavy leather heel rubbing models of the past that while securing a golfer's stance only added to the leg fatigue experienced after walking 18 holes.

Brands such as FootJoy looking at every element of its shoes to not only improve traction but comfort and support, as well as a diverse range of fits and styles.

The latest model from the company owning the "No.1 Shoe in Golf" reputation is an update to its HyperFlex for men and women and new HyperFlex Carbon available in men's.

When it comes to the HyperFlex, FootJoy takes the definition of "hyper" as above and beyond normal when it describes the model as offering "hyper power, hyper control and hyper fit".

Power in the golf swing comes from the ground up, and the new HyperFlex delivers that through an 'OptiFlex' outsole that promotes stability both when swinging the club and walking, while the Carbon model takes this further through a moulded carbon fibre power plate. The HyperFlex Carbon also incorporating additional cushioning under the foot via a 'OrthoLite Impressions FitBed'.

Control comes in the form of a 'ThermoPlastic Saddle Strap' that wraps around golfer's feet for medial and lateral support, the latter harnessed by the model's 'Power Stabiliser' outsole.

For unmatched comfort during and after the round, a blend of cushioning and shock absorption is created by the company's 'StratoFoam',

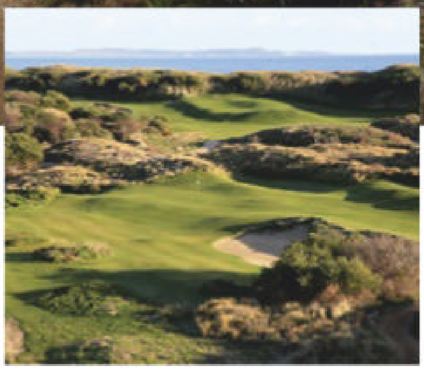
"The new HyperFlex and HyperFlex Carbon offer Tour-proven enhancements within the athletic silo, delivering unquestioned innovation, comfort, stability and a visual design aesthetic that celebrates performance technology for the golfer athlete," Director of Product Management for FootJoy Patrick Trubiano said.

SRP: $279.95 (laced); $329.95 (BOA); $329.95 (Carbon laced); $379.95 (Carbon BOA).
www.footjoy.com.au ▶

THE THIRD ANNUAL

HALLIDAY BARNBOUGLE CUP 2023

2 – 4 JUNE 2023



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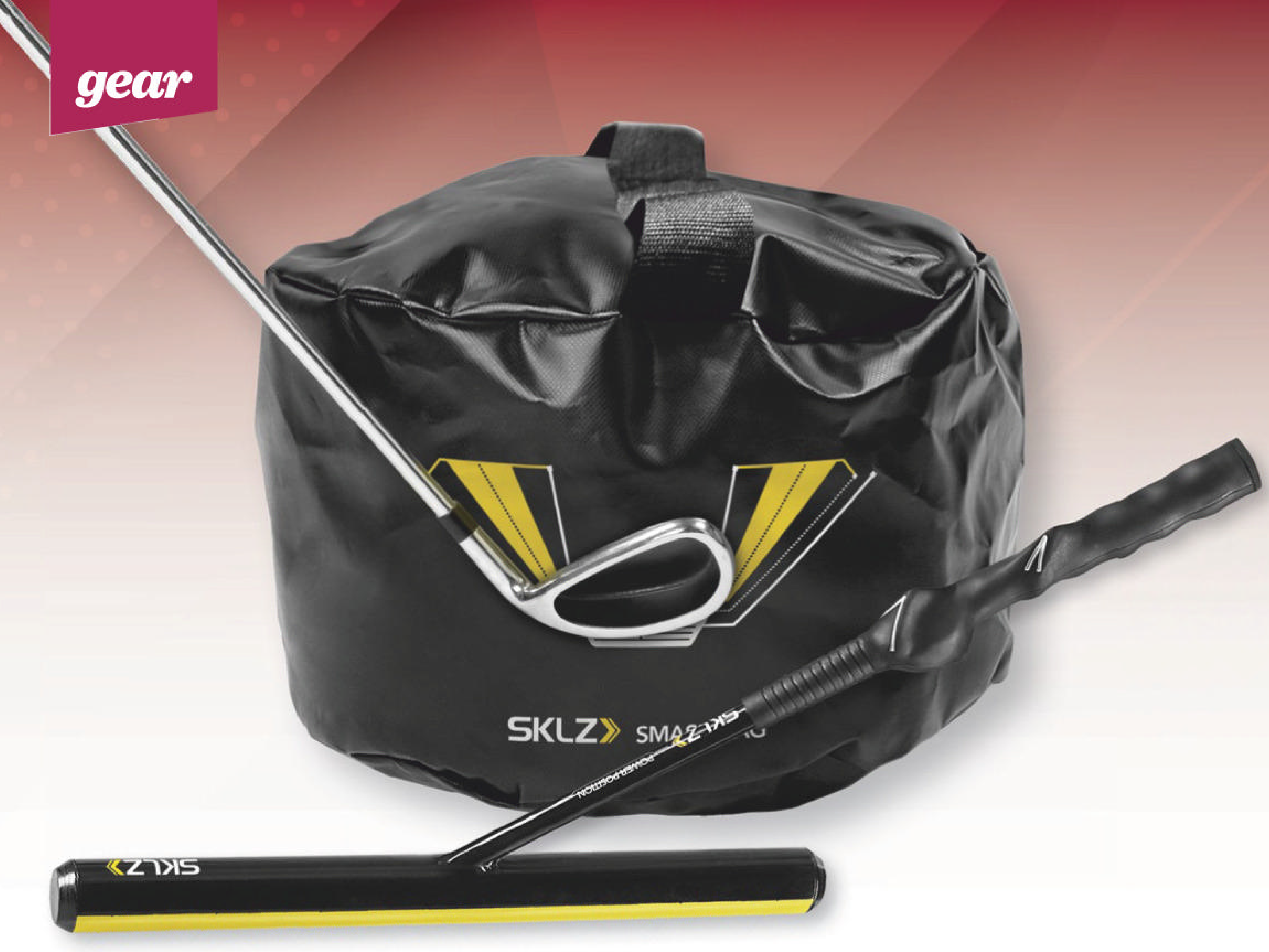

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www.sklz.com

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METERS
264
CLUB SPEED
MPH
115.0
PATH
7.6
INSIDE-OUT
SMASH FACT
1.48
BACKSPIN
2744

SHOT 9
SHOT HISTORY
TOTAL
METERS
278
BALL SPEED
170.2
FACE
4.5
OPEN
LAUNCH

The 2023 DRIVER TEST

There is no greater feeling than catching a drive right out of the centre of the clubface and watching it sail off into the distance towards the short grass.

The game of golf has become more and more about driving the golf ball not only long, but straight and equipment companies have engaged in something of an arms race to produce models for every player from Tour pro to weekend hacker to create their best drives.

With so many options from every company, we assembled a team of testers of varying handicaps, swing types and club preferences to run through as many options as possible from the current offerings to shed some light on what works for who.

And, in doing so, perhaps it will help you find your own new driver that will have you hitting it past your regular playing partners and shooting lower scores in 2023. ▶

THE MODELS TESTED

In an exercise like this there are endless options to put through the testing process and we set out to run a wide variety of models from various brands for a one stop driver test.

WE TESTED:

- Callaway Paradym range
- Cobra AEROJET range
- PING G430 range
- Srixon ZX MKII range
- TaylorMade Stealth2 range
- Titleist TSR range
- Tour Edge Exotics E722
- Wilson Staff Dynapower Carbon

A thank you to Drummond Golf at Stanmore, Sydney, and franchise owner Craig Delaney for the use of their Big Swing simulators to conduct the testing.

THE TESTERS

Low handicap power player
A low single figure golfer who plays at least once a week, this tester averages around 270 metres with each drive.

Single figure handicap finesse player
This tester carries a handicap of eight and plays regularly with an average driver of 245 metres.

Mid handicap straight driver
Playing to a handicap fluctuating between 12-15, this tester is a very straight driver of the golf ball who plays every week and averages 220 metres off the tee.

High handicap player chasing distance
Our final tester averages 200 metres with each drive and is a couple-of-times a month golfer who can struggle with a slicing ball flight on their bad drives.

The
2023
DRIVER
TEST

FULL SWING
150M
100M
50M

CALLAWAY PARADYM

RRP: $1,069.99
www.callawaygolf.com.au

Low single-figure handicap
Looks like there is very little loft on the face compared with other drivers I tested. It offered a slightly firmer feel at impact, which I didn't mind. Standing over the ball, the club was balanced in my hands and I had a feeling like I could really swing hard at the ball. Watching some of the other testers, my higher ball speed didn't experience as big of a jump, but I had more luck with the Triple Diamond version that also appealed more to my eye.

Single-figure handicap
Feels a bit softer off the face and is closer to my preferred impact sensation, and I really liked the sound. I had more speed off the clubface than any of the other drivers and was my favourite of the bunch. I even managed an extra 20 metres carry on my best drive of the test and felt I could swing freely. My typical left miss was also minimised. My desired driver ball flight is a tight draw and that was the stock flight with this driver.

Mid-handicap
The Paradym went further than most of the other drivers I tested and consistently so. It sits well behind the ball, and I felt I could go after the ball a little more with this club. The confidence inspiring look at address was terrific and I liked how the face looks a little shallower, which is something I tend to seek out in a driver having been more accustomed to smaller heads for much of my golfing life.

High-handicap
This club looked good at set-up and felt really nice off the face. Absolutely loved the sound! Noticed a higher ball flight in my first two drives that got the ball carrying further in the air without losing any roll and even managed to get my carry distance consistently over 200 metres. Didn't miss any drives … Flight, result and distance was super consistent. All around it was great!

PARADYM
FORGED CARBON
JAILBREAK AI
10.5
PARADYM X
FORGED CARBON
JAILBREAK AI
10.5
PARADYM
FORGED CARBON
JAILBREAK AI
10.5

CARRY
94
TOTAL
CLUB SPEED
66.4
PATH
0.3
SMASH FACTOR
1.43
BACKSPIN
1338
TO TARGET

AEROJET
MAX
10.5° STD
LS
9.0° STD
10.5° STD

COBRA AEROJET

RRP: $899
www.cobragolf.com.au

Low single-figure handicap
Drives felt hot off the clubface. Hit some drives off the toe and they still performed. I like the look of the Aerojet at address, especially with all the carbon on the clubhead which has the look of a fancy sportscar. While I didn't particularly like the head shape, when considering the driver as a whole I like it all around. Not really a wow factor club for me but a solid all-round performer.

Single-figure handicap
I loved the feel off the face of the Aerojet, which was, for mine, similar to the Callaway Paradym. It's got a classic look, and reminded me of a number of Cobra drivers I had used as a younger player, which certainly helped my confidence in hitting this club. I really liked the slightly lower trajectory and tighter shot shape and, for me, this was right up with the longest drivers in the group.

Mid-handicap
I like this driver. It was well balanced, with a swing weight that seemed to fit well with my preference both at address and for my tempo. The Aerojet felt similar off the clubface to the other models I enjoyed hitting. The Aerojet was forgiving with a slightly higher ball flight than some of the other drivers, which produced consistent distance. It is a fairly classic shape at address, which I liked.

High Handicap
I was a little surprised with this driver. To me, it felt light in the hands and initially I didn't have high hopes for the Aerojet. However, I liked the sound off the face and the flight was really consistent, as was the distance even when I missed the centre of the clubface. This driver was a real eye-opener for me on the day. ▶

PING G430

RRP: $995 (Max & SFT); $1,050 (LST).
www.americangolf.com.au

Low single-figure handicap
The G430 looks bigger behind the ball than some of the other drivers I tested, with a longer head from heel-to-toe. I really don't mind this one … it felt very easy to hit, while my shot dispersion was really good and flight and distance was consistent. The LST model kept the ball flight down and looked a little smaller to my eye, which is more my style of driver.

Single-figure handicap
Drives felt good off the clubface, with a bit of a louder sound at impact compared with other drivers I tested. I noticed the feel of my mis-hits a little more with this driver and took a little while to get it dialled in, but my good shots were similar with others and managed to get a couple of drives out there, which were close to my best of the day.

Mid-handicap
This was a very forgiving driver and was very consistent in both accuracy and distance on almost every drive I hit. I struck shots all across the face early in my time with the PING drivers and still experienced similar results time and again with the Max model.

High-handicap
The feel was typical of a Ping driver, which is something I am very familiar with. As soon as I put this driver down behind the ball, I felt comfortable with the look. Taking easier swings with the G430, I found my best drives of the day in terms of carry, total distance and accuracy.

PING
MAX
G430
10.5
PING
LST
G430
9
PING
SFT
G430
10.5

REBOUND FRAME
SRIXON
ZX5
MK II
9.5
STD LOFT

TAYLORMADE STEALTH2

RRP: $1,019 (Stealth2 & Stealth2 HD); $1,119 (Stealth2 Plus).
www.taylormadegolf.com.au

Low single-figure handicap
This driver felt nice off the face, with quite a soft sensation at impact.
I found with the standard model in its standard set-up, the ball went a bit more left than I would normally hit my current driver and other newer models I have tried. Certainly easy to look at behind the ball, with a compact head design although I find the red of the face busy to my eye. Despite the occasional left shot, the dispersion in terms of distance and direction overall was very impressive.

Single-figure handicap
The feel of the Stealth2 was pretty similar to my current (but older) TaylorMade driver, although the sound is a more muted

REBOUND FRAME
SRIXON
ZX7
Mk II
9.5
STD LOFT

SRIXON ZX MKII

RRP: $749
www.srixon.com.au

Low single-figure handicap
This was a surprisingly strong performer for me having not had much experience with Srixon clubs, particularly drivers. I am a fan of Japanese equipment and this driver range is certainly true to the history of performance without too much over the top in terms of looks from some of my favourite brands. The ZX7 was certainly the one for me in terms of shape and performance.

Single-figure handicap
Another very solid driver offering that, although it didn't stand out from the crowd with any numbers that dropped my jaw, it held its own. It had a really solid feel off the clubface that I liked and had a nice high, low-spin flight that stayed straight.

Mid-handicap
The ZX5 is my sort of shape and the simplicity of the look appealed to me. The ball flight was good, as was the feel that was nicely in the middle of all the drivers tested. The ZX5 and ZX7 models are, in my opinion, certainly an improvement on some older Srixon drivers I have tried.

High-handicap
This driver performed well and lived up to expectations. It felt like I got some good pop off the face at impact and the ball flight was straight to even an occasional draw, which is my desired shot shape that I often struggle to produce. Distance and forgiveness were on par with a lot of the others and while I have tended towards other brands in the past, I would definitely consider it if I was in the market for a new driver.

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because of the carbon face. Early on, I struggled to consistently find the middle of the clubface and was a little surprised by how much feedback there was from the strike location given the face is so different to any other driver I have hit before. The forgiveness of the Stealth2 was really the standout feature. Mis-hits were still strong and getting out to 250 metres, which is where I would hit a good drive with my current club.

Mid-handicap
The forgiveness of the Stealth2 was the biggest feature for me here. Bad swings and strikes still came back on line and I had a good deal of confidence it was always going to take off on a good flight. Didn't love the red colouring look but the feel was solid if not a stand out performer across all the drivers.

High-handicap
I was expecting it to feel very different to other drivers because of the carbon face, but it felt good at impact. It was, however, on the loud side compared to the driver I currently use, yet it wasn't a bad sound and every shot I hit with this driver found the fairway. Even slight mis-hits didn't veer far off line. ▶

STEALTH2
CARBONWOOD
SPEED POCKET
TaylorMade
9.0
STEALTH2
CARBONWOOD
SPEED POCKET
HD
TaylorMade
10.5
STEALTH2
CARBONWOOD
SPEED POCKET
FADE
N
DRAW
PLUS
TaylorMade
9.0

The
2023
DRIVER
TEST

TITLEIST TSR

RRP: $899; $1,199 (premium shaft).
www.titleist.com.au

ULL SWING
197
216
101.0
138.8
3.5
12
13.7
15.4
2527
208
24.7
BIG SWING GOLF
FULL SWING

Low single-figure handicap
The height and shape of the clubface really appealed to me and I got the sense I could hit different shots with this, as opposed to some of the other drivers that I felt I was restricted to one shot shape. A low draw as well as a higher flighted fade were more easily achieved with this driver. This driver was really impressive.

Single-figure handicap
The TSR carries the classic Titleist driver shape, which is really appealing and looked great at address. It didn't feel hard at impact, if anything the feeling was quite soft for me. This was probably my favourite of all the drivers tested – ball flight was consistently good, was easy to control and, for me, it generated the most ball speed, consistently, ahead of any of the other drivers.

Mid-handicap
I wanted to like this one and I did. It is easily the best looking clubhead of the bunch in my opinion. There is technology in there that made a difference but it is hidden and without some of the bells and whistles of some of the other drivers we tested. That said, the TSR2 still looks a little big for my taste, but the TSR3 and definitely the TSR4 had less of that issue.

High-handicap
Couldn't help but like everything about the look and feel. It appeared smaller at address than some of the other drivers, which surprisingly didn't deter me from swinging freely even though I tend to seek out more forgiving looking drivers. Pretty simply, I liked it. It was much easier to hit than I thought it was going to be and probably the most forgiving Titleist driver I have ever hit and it didn't give up anything when it came to distance. ▶

TSR3
TSR2
TSR4

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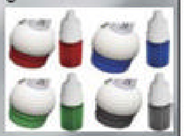

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The 2023 DRIVER TEST

TOUR EDGE EXOTICS E722

RRP: $699
www.drummondgolf.com.au

Low single-figure handicap
This driver performed much better than I thought it would. It feels like there is a lot of mass directly behind the ball that almost just extends off the clubface. Didn't actually hit it further than other drivers but felt like it was taking off at impact. I kind of like this club, for the price it is a really solid performer.

Single-figure handicap
This driver is surprisingly good and liked it even more when I found out it was $400 cheaper than some of the other drivers tested and performed just as well. It had a better ball flight than some of the bigger-named models. It was really forgiving, a little loud, but overall it impressed.

Mid-handicap
This driver felt heavy in the head and sat a little closed at address. The ball came out a bit higher off the clubface and I could sense a lot more spin that was confirmed by the launch monitor. Not the kind of thing I would typically look at for myself, but there was enough to like about this at the price.

High-handicap
For the price point it performed fairly well. After falling in love with one of the other models this was my next point of call. It was a tough act to follow but still an impressive all-round driver.

Tour Edge
EXOTICS
MAX ION
E722
9.5

FULL SWING
216
253
110.6
160.0
2.9
7.0
1.45
7.2
2278
380
13.3

DYNAPWR
CARBON
Wilson
9.0°

WILSON DYNAPOWER CARBON

RRP: $799.99
www.wilson.com

Low single-figure handicap
I quite liked the look of this driver at address. Shots don't feel like they're taking off at impact but drives still performed admirably in terms of distance and carry compared with other drivers.

Single-figure handicap
Right in the middle of the road performance and feel wise for me. Slightly harder feel to the others off the clubface, and while not a standout performer, this was a good honest club. It's a club you would let date your daughter!

Mid-handicap
The Wilson driver was perhaps not quite as forgiving as others in the test, with some of my off-centre strikes really dropping in distance and accuracy. But my good strikes held up though, and it looks quite good … a nice, simple driver.

High-handicap
The Wilson Staff driver was a nice solid option. The ball flew strongly on the good strikes, but it was not as forgiving as some of the other bigger name drivers. I liked how it looked at address and wouldn't have an issue putting it in play although it wouldn't be my first choice of all the drivers we tested.

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THE FINAL PUTT

BY GOLF AUSTRALIA DEPUTY EDITOR | **JIMMY EMANUEL**

"THE RULES ARE THE RULES. BUT WE DON'T HAVE TO LIKE THEM"

This year ushered in an update to the rules of golf that was, rightly, lauded for its intention to make the game more inclusive.

Any effort golf can make to widen the pool of potential players is magnificent, and likewise modernising and refining the rules regularly is a positive for a game often accused of being stuck in the past.

Yet some of the rules in place remain frustrating beyond the pale, as I was personally reminded recently.

To help out a player, this writer found himself on the bag at one of The Players Series events on the PGA/WPGA Tours of Australasia.

After two good rounds, a weekend charge was in the offing for Steph Bunque, a powerful player who with some confidence could push on to bigger and better things overseas.

Alas, the weekend charge never even got started when Bunque was disqualified for signing an incorrect scorecard following the second round.

A player is responsible for checking their score before "attesting" to it via their signature, something they shouldn't do until they have matched their own record keeping to that of the player in the group that was keeping their official score.

In the case of Bunque, the total shot number added up, and a signature was added. Then when waiting for her lift home, the Victorian noticed an error in the sequence of three holes and the individual scores recorded on the Tour's app.

A four and three being swapped over saw her return to the scorers to let them know, upon which her card and the tear off strip she tracked her scores on were brought out and the error discovered. It didn't help that the on course scorer had the same sequence incorrectly marked.

The only option was to disqualify Bunque and make it a financial loss for the week.

To her credit, and as she should, Bunque accepted her fate and knew full well that her score is her responsibility.

The ridiculous part of all this is that the total score was correct, which is how the leaderboard and resulting prizemoney is decided. However, when a golfer signs their card, they are actually attesting to the individual hole scores.

If the total was added up incorrectly, no such disqualification would take place.

If the scores that were mixed around were higher rather than lower, again no disqualification takes place and the written score becomes official.

Bunque's incident is just the latest in golf's history of incorrect cards that includes the most famous of all when Roberto Di Vicenzo uttered the classic line "What a stupid I am" at Augusta National.

As everyone was quick to point out, "She won't do it again" and accepting the mistake as a learning experience in her career is important for Bunque. Yes, the rules are the rules. But we don't have to like them.

demandscience
2023 Official Scorecard

RULES AROUND THE SCORECARD AND SCOREKEEPING CAN BE HARSH.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES.

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